

Yemeni mediation panel sidetracked

SANAA (AP) — Socialist allegations that Prime Minister Haider Al Attas was accused by northern soldiers while trying to enter the capital sidetracked a resumed effort Saturday to resolve a dispute between southern and northern leaders. The "dialogue committees" composed of high-ranking tribal figures and officials discussed the incident and ordered a special investigating team headed by Interior Minister Yehya Al Mutawakil to report on the incident. Committee members had planned instead to discuss ways to resolve the dispute between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh that has plunged the country into a deepening political and economic crisis. Socialists said three units of military police equipped with heavy, medium and light arms intercepted Mr. Attas' motorcade Friday on the outskirts of the capital. The party contended the force was led by an officer known to be close to President Saleh (see page 2). The Socialists complained that Mr. Attas, a member of the party, was allowed to proceed only after he contacted a number of leaders, including the president.

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King visits JIB in London

LONDON (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, who is on a private visit to the United Kingdom, Saturday visited the Jordanian Information Bureau in London and met with its staff. Bureau head Nasser Judeh briefed the King on the office's activities which were initiated in 1992. He said that the bureau had started contacts with Jordanian students in Britain to provide them with cultural and economic and political publications about Jordan. The bureau is entrusted with presenting the Jordanian views to the British press.

Syria slams Arafat for missing deadline

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria Saturday sharply criticised Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat for missing a deadline for an agreement on the details of an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. "Israel is hypocritically playing for time and knows that Arafat will lay down his cards one after the other to achieve any gain to hold up to the Palestinian and Arab opposition," the official Al Thawra daily said. "Israel knew the PLO leader could no longer stop (his initiative) since surrender is a bottomless pit," the paper said. "So the game of blackmail began just when Arafat seemed defenceless." Mr. Arafat, it argued, was desperately trying to salvage the Israeli-Palestinian accord on limited autonomy for Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho signed Sept. 13 in Washington, adding that his concessions would completely water down the deal. "All the agreement's clauses will then be interpreted according to Israeli logic and not be subject to discussion," it said.

Holst suffered a minor stroke

OSLO (AP) — Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst, who secretly brokered a secret Middle East peace agreement, has suffered a minor stroke, his doctors said Saturday. Mr. Holst was hospitalised for the second time in three weeks late Thursday after he became acutely ill aboard a government jet that was bringing him home from meetings in Spain. "He has been fully conscious the whole time and his intellectual functions have not been affected," said a brief statement signed by his doctor, Rolf Nyberg-Hansen, of the National Hospital in Oslo.

Libyan rebels sure dissident kidnapped

CAIRO (AFP) — The Libyan opposition in Egypt said Saturday it was "convinced" that one of its leaders, Mansour Kikhaia, who went missing in Cairo last Saturday, had been kidnapped by agents of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. Mohammed Jibril, Cairo spokesman for the opposition Libyan National Salvation Front, told AFP that on Thursday the front managed to contact Mr. Kikhaia's brother Mahmoud, who lives in Benghazi, in northeastern Libya. "Mahmoud Kikhaia said a Libyan official had assured (Mansour) Kikhaia's relatives that Mansour was in Libya, but did not say whether Mansour's family had managed to meet him, or whether the Libyan dissident went to Libya willingly," Mr. Jibril said. "The Libyan opposition is convinced Mansour Kikhaia was kidnapped by agents" of Colonel Qadhafi, Mr. Jibril said. (See page 2)

Assad meets Sedki

DAMASCUS (AP) — President Hafez Al Assad met Saturday with Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki for talks on the latest developments in the Middle East and in bilateral relations. The official Syrian Arab News Agency said Dr. Sedki briefed Mr. Assad on the meetings of the supreme joint Syrian-Egyptian committee and efforts to boost cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

Israel, PLO meet in Oslo in bid to end self-rule deadlock

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials were set to begin key talks in Oslo late Saturday in a bid to break the deadlock over implementation of the Palestinian autonomy plan, a senior Israeli government official said.

The official said the six-member Israeli team would include Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Israel's chief negotiator at the autonomy talks in Egypt, General Amnon Shahak.

The delegation would try to "overcome the differences which arose recently," the official said, but he stressed that Israel would "not make any concessions on security matters."

Asked whether Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would meet PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Cairo next week the official said "everything depends on the results of the contacts over the next few days."

The two leaders failed to agree on key aspects of implementing Palestinian autonomy at talks in Cairo last Sunday, but said they hoped to meet again in about 10 days' time.

Israel and the PLO began direct talks on Oct. 13 in Egypt to launch Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho by Dec. 13, but failed to meet the deadline set out in the accord signed in Washington in September.

Israeli Television said on Saturday that Mr. Rabin's political adviser Jacques Neria had "gone abroad" to hold talks with PLO officials, but gave no further details.

Israeli army radio meanwhile said Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and foreign ministry director-general Uri Savir would join the talks in Oslo on Monday. They would focus on the future Palestinian police force to be deployed in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, the radio added.

Earlier, a PLO official in Tunis said the PLO would offer to drop its demand for sole control of crossing points, at the meeting with Israel in Norway.

Chief negotiator Nabil Shaath and other PLO officials will instead propose that an equal number of Israeli forces and Palestinian police man posts between the self-rule areas and Egypt and Jordan, the official said.

The official, a member of the PLO Executive Committee who asked not to be named, said the delegation would also offer some compromises in other areas which he did not specify.

The PLO delegation arrived in Cairo Friday after receiving its instructions from Tunis, and then left the Egyptian capital for Oslo on Saturday.

Sources in Cairo said the PLO team travelling to Norway included Yasser Abed Rabbo, the organisation's information department head.

"We want to prevent the next Arafat-Rabin summit failing as was the case for the last one in Cairo," Mr. Abed Rabbo told Reuters before heading for Oslo.

The PLO was willing to compromise in some areas to meet Israeli security demands, he said.

He said the PLO was ready to share control of borders with international forces which

would ensure Palestinians did not smuggle heavy arms into the occupied territories.

Electronic surveillance of border points by Israeli authorities would allow them to monitor the identity of those passing through, Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

Israel says the two sides agreed at the outset that it would have responsibility for external security. The PLO says the declaration of principles leaves the control of the borders to be negotiated.

"What is the meaning of Israeli control of the passages when these are for access to Palestinian zones from which the Israelis have withdrawn," Mr. Najab said.

On Jericho, the PLO says the area should be about 300 square kilometres. Israel puts the area at 27 square kilometres.

The PLO says Israeli security patrols in Gaza should be confined to the settlements. Israel, PLO officials say, wants control of about 10 per cent of the strip to do the job.

In the Norwegian capital, foreign ministry spokesman Jan Egeland said that U.S., Russian, Egyptian and European officials would join in the talks on Monday at an Oslo hotel.

Talks snagged on the control of crossing points between the autonomous areas and neighbouring Egypt and Jordan, as well as on the size of the Jericho district and an Israeli troop presence around Jewish settlements.

The Palestinians had demanded sole control over the borders. Mr. Peres said in Paris Thursday that Israel must re-

(Continued on page 3)



A young Palestinian kicks a burning tyre during a protest in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on Saturday against the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement (AFP photo)

Israeli soldiers clash with Ramallah protesters

RAMALLAH, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers wounded four Palestinians in clashes in the occupied West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday, Arab sources said.

The army sealed off the town during the clashes by setting up checkpoints on major roads, eyewitnesses said.

An army spokesman said it was declared a closed military area because people were throwing stones and burning tyres.

Reuters photographer Khaled Zighari was lightly wounded in the leg by a rubber bullet when soldiers dispersed a group of Palestinians throwing stones at paramilitary border policemen.

"I was in the centre of the city," he said. "Young Palestinians began to throw stones at the soldiers. The soldiers were ready to shoot. The first shot hit me."

Local residents said three other Palestinians were slightly wounded when troops fired rubber bullets and percussion grenades at 30 to 40 stone-throwing youths.

The youths, demonstrating against the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) peace deal with Israel, burned tyres and blocked off a main road in the town.

Under the deal signed by Israel and the PLO in September, Israeli forces should have started withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho on Dec. 13.

But disputes between the two sides have led to a delay in implementing the accord.

Reuters photographer David Silverman said he saw soldiers checking cars entering Ramallah from Jerusalem and a helicopter circling over the town.

In the West Bank town of Nablus on Saturday, about 120 Palestinians demonstrated against the PLO and its deal with Israel.

Leading the protest was an eight-year-old boy holding a submachinegun, witnesses

which opposes the Israeli-PLO autonomy deal, they said.

Fateh-PFLP clashes

Six Palestinians were wounded in clashes here on Saturday between militants from Fateh faction and the PFLP, Palestinian sources said.

The clashes arose from a private dispute over possession of a football pitch in the Sheikh Radwan district, the sources said, and were not linked to the PFLP's opposition to the PLO-Israel accord on limited autonomy for the Palestinians.

The militants exchanged blows and threw stones at each other before leaders of Fateh and the PFLP managed to separate them.

Earlier in Jerusalem a commander of an Israeli undercover unit said the army had stepped up the activities of its undercover units, responsible for tracking down wanted Palestinians, due to a rise in anti-Israeli attacks.

Speaking on Israeli Radio, the commander, whose name was not given, said: "We have a bigger presence on the ground and our activities have been bolstered, due to the growth in the activities of (extremists) who claim success in killing settlers."

"They are using increasingly sophisticated methods, and we are adapting to them, because our work against wanted armed Palestinians continues."

He said there was no question of dismantling the special units, whose members are usually disguised as Palestinians, despite the Israel-PLO autonomy accord.

Several Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations have slammed the special units' actions, accusing them of liquidating Palestinians.

The colonel insisted his unit was "not a unit of killers, inasmuch as it follows the same orders on when to open fire as those in effect in the army as a whole."

Algerian presidency may get extension

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The mandate of Algeria's ruling high State Council could be extended by a month until the end of January, Radha Malek, prime minister and member of the presidential council said Saturday.

The extension of the mandate was requested by the National Dialogue Commission, formed to seek a solution to the country's political crisis which has pitted the military-backed government against Islamic fundamentalists, to allow time for a conference on the transition.

The council's mandate was due to expire on Dec. 31. The five-member council has ruled Algeria since January 1992, when the authorities cancelled a general election in which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a huge first-round lead.

Mr. Malek told foreign journalists that the dialogue commission, which is holding talks on leading Algeria to democracy, had asked for a one-month extension for its work.

Because the commission was responsible to the ruling council this would involve extending its mandate as well, Mr. Malek said. "The two are linked," he said.

On Thursday night Mr. Malek said in a television interview that the council would step down at the end of the year, as planned.

The five-man presidency has been trying to prepare a political conference to organise a gradual transition to a multi-party democracy and free-market economy. Algeria has been under emergency rule for almost two years.

But so far the council has fought shy of giving any role to

the FIS, which wants to establish an Islamic state and says it won more than 80 per cent support in the first round of voting in 1992.

On Friday police rounded up dozens of men after prayers at two fundamentalist mosques in Algiers after the banned FIS set conditions for talks with the government.

The authorities replied to the offer with several conditions of their own which appeared to exclude the front but left the door open to others.

Since the cancellation of the 1992 poll, at least 1,000 militants, civilians and security personnel have been killed in political violence, including 23 foreigners targeted by the militants since September. The prime minister said a decision on whether to extend the council's mandate had not yet been

Nabulsi: Reopening of banks unrelated to accord with PLO

AMMAN (J.T.) — The reopening of Jordanian commercial banks in the Israeli-occupied West Bank is not contingent on the signing of an economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Mohammad Said Nabulsi said Saturday.

Dr. Nabulsi said he was surprised by news reports on the subject. "The reopening of the Jordanian banks in the occupied territories that were closed in 1967 has been (under consideration) since 1968," he said.

On Friday, Agence France Presse quoted a Jordanian official as saying: "We can no longer wait and if the PLO has not replied by Dec. 20, we will interpret this silence as an answer and will go ahead and open our banks."

Dr. Nabulsi said that there had been many attempts to reopen the banks in the past, but they were unsuccessful except for the Cairo-Amman Bank that resumed operation in 1986 through a special agreement.

He said that since the peace talks had started the time was suitable for reopening those branches within the framework of peace. The matter has been discussed and the banks will reopen under new regulation, the CBJ governor said.

Dr. Nabulsi pointed out that eight banks with 31 branches operated in the West Bank until 1967.

He said that Jordan and Israel had reached a memorandum of understanding within the framework of the peace talks by which the CBJ would oversee the work of these branches and their licensing.

He added that the Palestinian side is aware of the agreement with the Israeli side.

Dr. Nabulsi said he asked Jordanian banks to be ready for the go ahead once the Cabinet approved the CBJ arrangements.

Jordan-PLO accord

Deputy Prime Minister Maan Abu Nouwar told Parliament Wednesday that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was expected to refer the draft economic accord document to the PLO Executive Committee for study as soon as he ended a visit to Britain and Ireland.

Dr. Abu Nouwar rejected deputies' suggestions that the draft agreement had "failed" and said he was personally assured by Mr. Arafat that it would be followed up.

Mr. Arafat returned to his Tunis headquarters Thursday from Ireland and chaired several meetings of the PLO leadership.

(Continued on page 5)

هكذا صنع الاصل

Military holds up Attas' motorcade

ADEN (R) — Armed military police in three jeeps briefly stopped Yemeni Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas from entering the capital Sanaa Friday, the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) said.

The motorcade of Mr. Attas, who is one of the YSP's leaders, was held up for about half an hour, the party politburo (leadership) said in a statement released in Aden.

The incident came amid months of paralyzing political feuding between Yemeni Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, who is head of YSP, and President Ali Abdullah Saleh over the direction Yemen has taken since north and south merged in 1990.

The prime minister was allowed to drive into Sanaa after he used his car phone to call several political leaders in the capital, the statement said.

It added that the jeeps followed the motorcade into the city centre.

Mr. Attas was coming from Aden, the southern port city where the formerly Marxist YSP has its base. It was not clear why he was stopped or who ordered the military police to let him proceed.

The YSP said the military police who stopped Mr. Attas were under the command of Colonel Mohammad Yahya Al Hawari, who is from the same northern tribe and village as President Saleh.

"Such incidents are designed to escalate the existing crisis," the statement said, adding that the YSP demanded an immediate investigation.

The YSP was the ruling par-

ty of South Yemen before unification. It ostensibly governs the united Yemen in coalition with Mr. Saleh's northern General Peoples' Congress (GPC) and the smaller Islah party.

But Vice-President Beedh abandoned the capital for Aden over three months ago and refused to carry out his constitutional duties after quarrelling with Mr. Saleh over unification, which he has likened to annexation of the south by the north.

The political crisis has paralysed the government, sparked reports of political killings, illicit armed roadblocks and troop movements and led to fears that Yemen's two halves might split.

"Part of the crisis between north and south is due to interference in the country's internal security situation by different military groups," the YSP statement said.

It repeated a demand, one of 18 made by Mr. Saleh by Mr. Beedh, that all troops be withdrawn from Yemen's cities.

The armies of former North and South Yemen, which watched each other suspiciously over the border before unification, have not yet been fully integrated.

Both Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh have said they do not want to see Yemen split, and Mr. Beedh has suggested that the best way to end the crisis was for both men to resign.

A coalition of Yemen's opposition parties called on the three ruling parties to resume dialogue aimed at solving the crisis.

Most Kuwaitis oppose voting rights for women

KUWAIT (R) — Most Kuwaitis oppose granting women the vote or the right to stand for parliament, according to an opinion poll published Saturday.

The Kuwait University survey of 3,500 men and women showed 58 per cent opposed political rights for women, 24 per cent wanted women to have the franchise and 18 per cent favoured granting women the right both to vote and to stand for parliament.

The survey published by newspapers showed a sharp split between traditionalist bedouin areas and liberal Kuwait City.

Ninety-one per cent of respondents in the mainly bedouin Jahra settlement and Kuwait's desert areas opposed giving women either the vote or the right to stand for parliament.

Most Kuwaiti respondents from the affluent central residential areas of Kuwait City

wanted full political rights for women — 77 per cent said they wanted women to have both the vote and the right to stand for parliament.

Organisers said in a statement 500 replies had to be cancelled because "many recipients who opposed women's rights filled the sheets with Koranic and other holy verses, poems and idioms supporting their views."

Women activists had hopes of winning the right to vote after the 1991 Gulf war liberation because of the prominent role women played in the civilian resistance to Iraqi occupation.

During the 1990-91 occupation the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, said he would consider giving Kuwaiti women the right to vote, although he added the issue required time.

The debate was revived when the country's parliament was restored in October 1992 after a six-year break.

Palestinian attitude to peace deal is volatile

By John West
Reuters

NABLUS, occupied West Bank — The level of Palestinian public support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deal with Israel could bounce back from current lows if Israel starts to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho, the head of a polling organisation said.

But four days after a troop pullout from the two areas was to have started, PLO leaders have begun preparing for the worst by forecasting more trouble in negotiations and hinting at a further delay in implementing self-rule.

A poll released on Thursday of more than a thousand

Palestinian showed support for the PLO's agreement with Israel dropped sharply to 41.5 per cent from 64.9 per cent in September. Opposition to the deal was now almost equal at 38.1 per cent.

Underlying support for Palestinian political factions backing the accord also dropped but they still have more support than factions opposing it, said the poll by the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS).

"There is about 20 or 25 per cent of the electorate which is the floating vote," CPRS head Said Kanaan told Reuters.

"Even many Fatah supporters now say they do not back the agreement but this could change tomorrow if there was

withdrawal."

The results suggested the delay in withdrawal had dented but not yet permanently damaged support for PLO Chairman Arafat and his Fatah faction.

An Israeli poll on Friday suggested Mr. Arafat's peace partner Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was also suffering a drop in popularity, although a majority of 54 per cent of Israelis believed he could still agree with Mr. Arafat on withdrawal.

PLO officials, like their Israeli counterparts, are now preparing public opinion for further delays and deadlock, which could erode Palestinian support to critical levels.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath joined the ranks of pessimists on Friday, saying Israel's insistence on controlling border posts could hold up talks.

"Israel's insistence on this point is a real threat to the declaration of principles... we are waiting to reach a formula which protects our rights so that we can return to the negotiating table," he told Al Quds newspaper.

On Thursday PLO official Yasser Abed-Rabbo said the agreement could be frozen if Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin failed to agree on terms for Israel's withdrawal next week, the first step of the complex, five-year agreement on self-rule.

PLO envoy in Jerusalem for first time in 27 years

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Palestinian representative in London, Afif Safieh, made a bittersweet homecoming to Jerusalem on Saturday after 27 years in exile, the first high-ranking Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official to make such a trip.

"It's a very moving moment for me. I hope each Palestinian family can be reunited with their loved ones," said Mr. Safieh, 43, after he embraced family and friends with whom he will spend Christmas.

He spoke optimistically of the peace accord, but regretted that the Israeli occupation had turned him into a "nomad" and expressed shock at the number of Jewish settlements around East Jerusalem.

The PLO and Israel broke a 29-year taboo when they recognised each other in the run-up to the autonomy accord that they signed on Sept. 13 in Washington.

Mr. Safieh left home for studies in Europe a year before Israel occupied East Jerusalem in the 1967 war.

He was prevented from coming home permanently under Israeli laws refusing all Palestinians the right to return and barred from even making a visit when he became a PLO member.

Under the September autonomy deal, Israel has agreed to consider allowing the permanent return of an undetermined number of Palestinians who fled in 1967.

Mr. Safieh said he was neither searched nor questioned upon arrival at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv. Monsignor Richard Matthes, representing the Vatican in Jerusalem, greeted Mr. Safieh, a Roman Catholic.

U.N. chief calls for safe return of missing Libyan

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali expressed concern Friday over the apparent abduction in Cairo of Libyan dissident and former Foreign Minister Mansour Kikhaia and urged Egyptian authorities to press their investigation.

"The secretary-general hopes that Mr. Kikhaia will reappear safe and sound without delay," a statement issued through a U.N. spokesman said.

Mr. Kikhaia, who once served as Libya's U.N. representative and later went into exile in Europe, disappeared after attending a meeting in Cairo early this month of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR).

He stayed on after the conference because he has friends and relatives in Cairo but disappeared from his hotel last Saturday, an AOHR official there told Reuters.

"The secretary-general has been approached on the subject of Mr. Kikhaia's disappearance and possible abduction by concerned non-governmental organisations," the spokesman said.

Dr. Ghali, a former Egyptian deputy prime minister, had contacted the Egyptian authorities and "encouraged them to pursue their investigation into the matter," he said.

Mr. Kikhaia's family appealed to the Egyptian government Friday to do more to help solve the mystery of his disappearance.

At a news conference in Washington, two of Mr. Kikhaia's daughters, his brother and a cousin said the Egyptian government had delayed four days before agreeing to investigate Mr. Kikhaia's disappearance.

They said the U.S. and Saudi government had pressed Egypt to pursue the case.

Libyan opposition leaders

Beirut moves to end television chaos

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese government has begun a drive to curb the proliferation of television channels in the country, where 48 private channels are already broadcasting illegally, some by satellite.

The cabinet approved a decree on Thursday banning the creation of new channels and, from next Tuesday, satellite broadcasts, pending proper regulation.

However, the decree has not been signed by President Elias Hrawi, and the heads of the major private networks urged him on Friday not to do so.

Meanwhile, some accused Prime Minister Rafik Hariri of trying to gain a monopoly on satellite transmissions for the channels under his control.

Mr. Hariri owns nearly all the shares in the Future TV channel, which has been broadcasting for one year, as well as 49 per cent of Tele Liban, the rest of which is owned by the state.

According to the new decree, only Lebanese nationals can use Arab satellite television channels for broadcasting.

Mr. Hariri, who has Saudi nationality, has the right to use three of the satellite's 12 channels.

The nine other channels are owned by Saudis: Four by businessman Salah Kamel, four by the Al Mawared Company, and one by Prince Khaled Ben Sultan, who also owns the Arabic-language daily Al Hayat.

The new regulation sidelines the strongest channel, the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), owned by the former Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces.

LBC signed an agreement with Prince Khaled to secure an outlet via Arabsat, but it could prove useless if the new decree takes effect.

LBC Director General Pierre Daher told reporters the decree was "tailor-made to give a satellite broadcasting monopoly to a well-known channel and to bar us from satellite broadcasting."

The charge was echoed in the opposition daily Nidaa Al Watan, which ran an editorial with the headline: "General outcry against the proposed monopolisation of satellite broadcasts." It said, "business deals are struck, and the law is then fashioned accordingly."

Officials at Future TV said simply that they saw nothing untoward in reserving exclusive satellite transmission rights for Lebanese nationals.

U.S. welcomes crackdown on settlers

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States Friday welcomed word Israeli soldiers had been ordered to crack down on Jewish settlers who attack Arabs in the occupied territories.

"We recognise and welcome the fact that Israeli officials have made it clear that lawlessness will not be tolerated," said State Department spokesman Michael McCurry. Mr. McCurry said the United States renewed its call for Israelis and Palestinians alike "to promote the work that will lead to national reconciliation, to do everything possible to exercise maximum restraint and stop violence at a time when the peace process itself needs to be nurtured."

The Israeli army said Thursday that its soldiers had been given orders to "take strong action against Jews engaged in illegal activities or who disturb the peace."

The prospect of violence between soldiers and settlers has always been a sensitive issue in Israel, where almost every Jewish family has a member serving in the military. In many recent cases of settler unrest, soldiers have stood by — or in at least one televised incident, run away — when confronted by Jews shooting at Arabs. Settlers have rampaged through Palestinian towns and villages in response to attacks on Jews.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hizbollah leader raps Vatican-Israeli deal

BEIRUT (R) — The spiritual leader of Lebanon's Hizbollah criticised the Vatican on Friday for a deal it is expected to sign this month with Israel establishing full diplomatic ties.

"This (agreement) gives the Zionists and Jews a big moral power in the world because the Vatican is recognising Israel atop the ruin of the Palestinian people," said Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadallah in a sermon at a Beirut mosque. Sheikh Fadallah — spiritual mentor of Hizbollah which is fighting Israeli forces in South Lebanon and opposes Arab-Israeli peace talks — urged guerrillas in Palestine and Lebanon to launch more attacks against the Jewish state.

"When the Vatican recognises Israel at a time when Israel has not given any concessions... this means Israel... will get greater power to oppress the Palestinians," Sheikh Fadallah said. The deal would make Israel more comfortable about withdrawal from occupied Arab land, he added.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Thursday that the agreement will be signed on Dec. 30. The Vatican, which supports a Palestinian homeland, has always recognised Israel's right to exist within secure borders. "It will give (Israel) power when the world's Catholics consider that Israel is right and the struggles in Lebanon and Palestine are wrong," Sheikh Fadallah said.

Arafat urged to reinstate journalist

LONDON (R) International anti-censorship group Article 19 urged Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat on Friday to reinstate a Cyprus-based Palestinian journalist it said had been unfairly dismissed by PLO officials in Tunis.

The London-based group said in a letter to the Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman that it was deeply concerned about Hussaini Hijazi, who has lived in Cyprus since 1984 and wrote for the PLO official weekly Falastine Al Thawra. "Article 19 believes that Mr. Hijazi has been dismissed, and may be deported from Cyprus, for peacefully expressing his opinions and exercising his duty as a journalist," the letter made available to news organisations said.

Article 19 said Mr. Hijazi had written an article for the London-based Arabic daily newspaper Al Hayat, published on July 26 this year, in which he discussed the PLO internal situation. It said the report "apparently displeased PLO officials in Tunis who decided to dismiss Mr. Hijazi."

The Cyprus authorities, tipped off by the PLO officials, then told Mr. Hijazi his residence permit would not be renewed. "We therefore earnestly request your immediate intervention to ensure that Mr. Hijazi is reinstated to his job and that the threat of his expulsion from Cyprus is withdrawn," Article 19's letter concluded.

U.S. carrier battle group arrives in Gulf

MANAMA (R) — A group of U.S. warships led by the aircraft carrier Independence has arrived in the Gulf to enforce U.S. air patrols over southern Iraq, a U.S. navy spokesman said.

Aircraft from the carrier have already begun training flights in connection with Operation Southern Watch air patrols, a navy spokesman for U.S. Central Command in Bahrain told Reuters. Carrier-based aircraft have not patrolled the southern marshes of Iraq since early October because carriers were diverted from the Gulf to Somalia.

The battle group includes a nuclear submarine, a cruiser, two frigates and two ships carrying ammunition and oil. The air patrols started in August 1992, using planes from carriers and bases in Gulf Arab states with the aim of protecting the Shiites of southern Iraq from alleged attacks by Iraqi government forces.

Turkish security forces seize hashish

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish security forces have captured one tonne of hashish in the eastern town of Baskale, the semi-official Anatolian agency reported Friday.

The hashish, captured during a search operation following a tipoff, was believed to belong to the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). No arrests were made. Anatolian said the hashish was ready for consumption and has an estimated street value of 20 billion liras (\$1.4 million). It did not say why the haul was seized. The government alleges that the PKK, which has been fighting for an independent Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey since 1984, funds its weapon purchases through drug trafficking.

22 killed in two road accidents in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Eleven people were killed when four vehicles collided in thick fog in northeastern Iran on Friday, three days after a similar number were killed in another road accident. Eighteen people were injured in Friday's accident which involved a bus, a minibus and two trucks near Pakdasht village on the Tehran-Mashhad highway, Iran's IRNA news agency said. On Tuesday, a truck and a minibus collided on a road in the Caspian coast province of Mazandaran, killing 11 people and injuring nine. Tehran's Salam newspaper reported.

Hebron settlers force Palestinians to observe Sabbath

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Every Friday evening armed Jewish settlers close off the main street in the old town of Hebron on the West Bank and force the Palestinians to observe the Sabbath.

"I have to close my shop until Saturday night to avoid being attacked by settlers," said 38-year-old grocer Issa Al Muhtasseb.

"Every Friday night they begin provoking us, blocking the road with barrels and preventing traffic from moving," he said.

Hebron's 70,000 Palestinian residents have been living in fear for the past three months, amid reprisals by Jewish settlers against the town's population for Palestinian attacks in the occupied West Bank.

The 500 ultra-nationalist settlers living in Hebron have used intimidation tactics to show their opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accord signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

"We're afraid to move in this street during the Sabbath. Two weeks ago settlers broke my car windows because I dared to go out on a Friday night," said shopkeeper Hijazi Khalili, 28.

"Al Sahleh street was once the liveliest street in Hebron. Today we call it the street of the dead," he said.

"The Israeli army gives them a free hand and never intervenes to protect us, even when the settlers' children come into our shops and cause damage," he added.

During the day, settlers drive their cars through Al

Sahleh honking their horns, while other settlers on foot keep their fingers on the triggers of their automatic pistols.

On Wednesday the Israeli army lifted a nine-day curfew imposed on Palestinians in Hebron after unknown assailants killed two Israeli settlers. The Jewish community was still allowed to move about freely during the curfew.

In revenge for the attack settlers killed three Palestinians.

"These measures are meant to protect the settlers, we're confined to our homes and they can move about freely," complained Ahmad Yassin, a 24-year-old day cleaner.

"The settlers have imposed restrictions at the tomb of

Abraham. They prevent all the young people from entering it, limit to 15 the number of worshippers at night, and force us to turn down the volume of loudspeakers broadcasting Friday prayers and sermons," he said.

The tomb of Abraham for the Muslims, or the cave of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for the Jews, has been a disputed site between the two religious communities sharing it since the Israeli army occupied the West Bank in 1967. Israeli soldiers keep a constant guard over it.

On Friday Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, the head of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, told thousands of worshippers the Israeli authorities wanted to "transform the tomb of Abraham into a synagogue."

"The settlers not only target innocent people and their property, now they are also attacking Muslim religious sites in full view of the Israeli army which protects them," he charged.

The Israeli army clamped a night-time driving ban on Palestinians of Hebron from Friday in a bid to halt car-borne attacks on Jews.

The ban will run from sunset to sunrise in the town.

The driving ban will not apply to Israelis, including the 500 settlers in Hebron and the 5,000 at the adjoining settlement of Kyriat Arba, an army spokesman said.

The number plates on cars owned by Palestinians living in the occupied territories are a different colour to those on Israeli vehicles.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Feature Film: "Mais Qu'est Ce Que Tu Fais Au Bon Dieu"
19:00	News in French
19:15	Feature Film: "Fenetre Sur Paris"
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	You Bet Your Life
21:10	Thirtysomething
22:00	News in English
22:30	
23:10	"The Men Who Killed Kennedy"
PRAYER TIMES	
06:03	Fajr
06:25	(Sunrise) Duha
11:52	Dhuhr
14:10	Asr
16:39	Maghreb
18:42	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Assam International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
It will be partly cloudy with clouds appearing at different altitudes. Temperatures will be above average and winds will be southeasterly moderate to light. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	5 / 17
Aqaba	12 / 24

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Ahmad Othman	786384
Dr. Adnan Al Zaghoul	898140
Dr. Ghaleb Zawahid	736011
Dr. Yousef Abdo	684916
Fires pharmacy	661912
Ferdous pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nairowah pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsan pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Fayez Al Qadi	248743
Alquda pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Walid Halaiah	982799
Khalifah pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Police	199
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896380
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Prix Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	63101
Repairs	661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
Complaints	08-53200
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/392
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Al-Sheikh Maternity, J. Amn	64441/2
Jahid Amman Maternity	642362
Mallous, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shamsan	664173/1
Shamsan Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musallat Hospital	66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/67
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Isaiah, Al-Muhajreen	771101/3
Al-Sheikh, J. Ashrafieh	77511/26
Army, Marjeh	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)999990
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Crack Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)34111

FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
05:15	Bangkok (RJ)
06:00	Aqaba (RJ)
06:30	Beirut (RJ)
06:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
06:50	Rome (RJ)
07:00	Vienna (RJ)
07:15	London (RJ)
07:30	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
07:45	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
08:00	Athens (RJ)
08:15	Cairo (RJ)
08:30	Riyadh (RJ)
08:45	Jeddah (RJ)
09:00	Cairo (RJ)
09:15	Damascus (RJ)
09:30	Aqaba (RJ)
09:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00	Paris, Brussels (RJ)
10:15	London (RJ)
10:30	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
10:45	Athens (RJ)
11:00	Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15	Vienna (RJ)
11:30	Rome (RJ)
11:45	Doha, Bahrain (GF)
12:00	Damascus (AZ)
12:15	Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)

DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
05:30	Aqaba (RJ)
06:00	Beirut (RJ)
06:30	Frankfurt (RJ)
06:45	Rome (RJ)
07:00	Vienna (RJ)
07:15	London (RJ)
07:30	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
07:45	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
08:00	Athens (RJ)
08:15	Cairo (RJ)
08:30	Riyadh (RJ)
08:45	Jeddah (RJ)
09:00	Cairo (RJ)
09:15	Damascus (RJ)
09:30	Aqaba (RJ)
09:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00	Paris, Brussels (RJ)
10:15	London (RJ)
10:30	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
10:45	Athens (RJ)
11:00	Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15	Vienna (RJ)
11:30	Rome (RJ)
11:45	Doha, Bahrain (GF)
12:00	Damascus (AZ)
12:15	Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)

HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES	
Upptower price in the per kg.	
Apple	720/430
Banana	60
Banana (Mukammal)	60
Beans	600 / 400
Cabbage	90 / 30
Carrot	240/180
Cauliflower	180 / 120
Clementine	180 / 120
Cucumber (large)	200 / 100
Cucumber (small)	330 / 300
Eggplant	180 / 100
Garlic	900/600
Grape Fruit	170/120
Lemon	

Home News

Government prepares to establish national oil and gas company

AMMAN (J.T.) — In implementation of guidelines contained in the Speech from the Throne before Parliament last month, the government is in the process of establishing a national oil and gas company to take over the role currently played by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) in prospecting for oil and gas in Jordan, according to an announcement by NRA Director-General Fakhreddin Al Daghestani.

At present, the NRA is focusing its attention on the Lisan area, along the Dead Sea coast, where it has conducted seismicological surveys, said Dr. Daghestani in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The NRA plans to issue a statement in the first quarter of 1994 giving details about the outcome of the seismicological survey and, in its light, the decision will be taken whether to pursue test drilling the operations in the Lisan area or halt there, Dr. Daghestani continued.

Earlier this year, the NRA drilled a well on the Dead Sea coast where signs of crude oil surfaced, but due to the closeness of the well to the sea, water filtered and filled the well.

Currently, the NRA is drilling two other wells, further away from the old well, with the purpose of determining the geological strata surrounding the three

wells, Dr. Daghestani added.

In addition, he said, the Jordanian government last July signed a contract with the South Korean firm Hanbo to prospect for crude oil in the Rashiah and Wadi Sarhan areas.

The NRA is also focusing on the Rishah area, close to the border with Iraq, where natural gas is being exploited, he pointed out.

The Rishah fields provide nearly eight per cent of Jordan's overall energy requirements, or 20 per cent of the Kingdom's electric power consumption, according to Dr. Daghestani.

"This is a relatively small amount but the NRA is drilling another well south of Al Rishah fields in order to find out if additional gas reserves exist there, he said.

Altogether, he added, 27 wells have been drilled in the Rishah area to date but some of them are unproductive.

In his speech from the Throne, delivered Nov. 23, His Majesty King Hussein said that "the government has continued oil and gas explorations in the Rishah and Dead Sea regions. It has expanded the capacity of the Rishah gas, operated power turbines and measures are being taken to establish a national oil and gas company.

Referring to the oil shale which is found in abundance in some parts of Jordan, Dr.

Daghestani said that the NRA has been conducting studies on the shale since the 1970s with the purpose of utilising it as an alternative source for oil. But, he noted, the cost of producing one barrel of shale oil proved to be costly, amounting to \$30, which makes the whole process economically unfeasible.

Dr. Daghestani highlighted the importance of the Dead Sea noting that its contents represent a real treasure for the Kingdom.

According to the NRA chief, the Dead Sea could be utilised as health spa while the water could be a source for chemical products for various industries.

Dr. Daghestani referred to the fertilizers company in Aqaba and pointed out that it was consuming some one million tonnes of raw minerals in the course of producing the fertilizers.

He said that the Arab Potash Company (APC) could make better use of the Dead Sea minerals by establishing companies specialising in the production of bromine, magnesium oxide and other products.

Asked on the prospect of exploiting copper, Dr. Daghestani said that Jordan has very limited quantities of this mineral and, in view of the current world copper prices, refining of copper in Jordan is unfeasible.

Peacekeepers and PSD officers get Royal medals

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces has conferred Jordanian "peacekeeping medals" on PSD officers participating in the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia and Cambodia.

Public Security Department (PSD) Director General Abdul Rahman Al Udwan presented the medals to a group of officers representing the units taking in the peacekeeping mission during a special ceremony held at the PSD headquarters Saturday.

General Udwan paid tribute to the Jordanian peacekeepers who, he said, had contributed towards lessening tension in troubled areas and served as ambassadors of their country abroad.

He expressed hope that the honouring of the officers would give them further incentives for further sacrifices.

Gen. Udwan also attended a ceremony in Amman, Saturday, in observance of Arab Police Day.

Brigadier Mohammad Tarazi, the PSD assistant chief for judicial affairs, delivered an

address noting that the anniversary serves as means of honouring all policemen in the Arab World.

He stressed that the occasion gives impetus to the PSD to exert all efforts towards continued modernisation of its system and ensuring stability and security for the Jordanian people.

Later, Gen. Udwan honoured a number of officers who had performed remarkable services and distributed Royal medals to them.

He also opened a PSD club which cost nearly JD 7 million.

Electric power to cover all of Jordan next year

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) announced Saturday that electric power was supplied to 240 villages during 1993 at the overall cost of JD 14 million.

Two hundred more villages will be electrified during 1994 at the total cost of JD 10 million, in accordance with a national plan for the supply of electricity to all regions, said Samih Ujjalat, JEA director of the electrification of rural region.

He said that more than 150,000 citizens would benefit from the project which, he noted, would raise to 100 per cent the electric power coverage.

At present, Mr. Ujjalat said, 98 per cent of Jordan's districts are supplied with electricity.

He said the national plan was drawn up by JEA in cooperation with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs as well as the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) and the Irbid district Electricity Company.

JEPCO Director-General Marwan Bushnaq said Saturday that the company plans to take steps to cope with the growing demand on electric power supply within its region through the company's five-year development plan.

Under the plan, JEPCO intends to set up main transformer stations and strengthen overhead cable transmission.

The plan also entails boosting the capacity of 24 existing transformer stations.

Qatari education minister starts visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Qatari Education Minister Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Turki Saturday started a four-day official visit to Jordan. Upon arrival he announced that his country was concerned in bolstering its ties with Jordan in all fields.

Mr. Turki, who was met upon arrival by his Jordanian counterpart Dr. Khaled Omari, said that he would meet with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and would hold talks with Acting Prime Minister Maan Abu Nowar and Higher Education Minister Saeed Al Tell as well as other government officials to promote Qatari-Jordanian relations.

Mr. Turki, who is scheduled to visit the University of Jordan and other Jordanian higher education institutions, said Jordan and Qatar were linked by a number of educational

agreements which help bolster ties between the Qatari and Jordanian people.

Expressing hope that the visit would further bolster bilateral ties, Mr. Turki said that his discussions here would mainly focus on cooperation in educational fields.

Dr. Omari, who extended the invitation to Mr. Turki, said upon welcoming him at the airport that the two sides would work out an executive programme for the implementation of an educational and cultural agreement earlier signed by the two sides.

Qatar hopes to expand bilateral scientific, cultural and educational cooperation to involve most Arab states, he added.

Accompanying Mr. Turki on the visit, is a large delegation of officials from the ministry of education in Qatar.

NEWS IN BRIEF

House to hold a session today

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament holds a session Sunday to hear government replies to queries by members of the 12th Parliament. The House will listen to a reply by Information Minister Jawad Al Anani about Jordan Television coverage of news about the Palestinian expellees in Marj Al Zuhour and another by Awqaf Minister Abdul Salam Al Abbadi about matters related to the Islamic cemetery in Amman. The House will also request that a special session be held later to debate the on-going peace process and Jordan's stand with regard to this process.

Cabinet forms delegations

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday formed Jordan's delegation to the meetings of the Arab ministers of transport due to be held in Cairo on Dec. 28. It also formed Jordan's delegation, which represents the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), to travel to Syria and buy an international telephone exchange system for the TCC. It also approved of the Ministry of Tourism's participation in a tourist exhibition to be held in Berlin at the beginning of next year.

Archaeological excavations continue in Aqaba

AQABA (Petra) — The Department of Antiquities announced Saturday that archaeological excavations are currently under way at the Ayleh Islamic site in the port city of Aqaba. It said that the site dates back to the early Islamic era, noting that a team of archaeologists from Chicago University in the United States is helping the department to carry out the excavation work.

Abbadi meets Iranian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Abdul Salam Al Abbadi Saturday received in his office Iran's ambassador to Jordan and reviewed with him ways for bolstering bilateral cooperation in religious affairs. They also discussed prospects of exchanging visits by ulema and Muslim scholars and publications. Dr. Abbadi also met Saturday with the head of a Palestinian society organising pilgrimage for Muslims from Palestinian lands occupied since 1948. Arrangements for facilitating the trip to the pilgrims were discussed with the society president.

Omanis begin training course

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the Omani ministry of education has started a training course at the National Centre for Educational Research and Development. The centre director, Victor Al Billeh, said that the Omani officials will learn about the centre's projects which entail controlling and promoting educational programmes for Jordan. He said that the team members will be touring a number of educational institutions.

SSC to open new branches

AMMAN (Petra) — According to an announcement by the Social Security Corporation (SSC), several SSC offices will be opened in the north, south and central parts of Jordan in the coming year. Ali Jaafar, director of the department in charge of the SSC's expansion, said that the new branches were needed to facilitate the corporation's work and take care of compensation, pension, occupational incidents and other matters.

RSCN delegation leaves to Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), led by its director Maher Abu Jaafar, left Saturday for Cairo to take part in a meeting on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. Mr. Abu Jaafar said delegates representing various non-governmental institutions in the Arab World will discuss the formation of pan-Arab bureau on the environment. The delegates to the three-day meeting will review their respective countries' experiments in the protection of the environment.

NGOs urge governments to uphold children's rights

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the title: "Together for the sake of the child," Arab human rights activists Saturday welcomed a call for cooperation with the Arab governments to put the J.N. convention on the rights of the child into operation.

At the start of a two-day seminar on the best methods to promote Arab children's rights and the role which non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should adopt to promote these rights, representatives of different Arab human rights organisations agreed that there should be continuous cooperation and coordination between the governments and the NGOs.

"It is a matter of attitude," said Huda Badran, president of the Cairo-based Arab Women's Association at the opening session of the seminar that was organised by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). "All governments earn to upgrade their (human rights) status... and they won't object to improvements if the approach (by the NGOs) is that of help and not of conflict."

Ms. Badran, who delivered a speech on the need of implementing the convention of the rights of the child in the Arab World, was responding to one of the questions raised in conflicts that exist between governments on the one hand and NGOs on the other.

"There is a clear conflict

between governments and NGOs that we can't ignore," said Egyptian Fawzi Farghali, executive commissioner of Arab Scout Movement. "We need to adopt a stand in which the child has to be separated from the conflict arena."

Amin Mekki from the Cairo-based Arab Lawyers' Union pointed out that "partnership" between governments and NGOs is a difficult task to achieve. The conflict, for example, that exists between a certain government and a minority in that country is going to necessarily influence the rights of the child.

From Iraq, Manal Yunis, president of the General Federation of Iraqi Women, said that the main problem lies in the way in which this coordination can be achieved.

"Coordination is possible and is needed because NGOs possess more precise information, are more aware of the issues at stake and are more in touch with the people," Ms. Yunis said. "But it (coordination) is difficult. What we really need is to define a plan of action to follow."

Participants in the first day of the seminar also stressed on the need to address the rights of girls as one of the priorities of the meeting. Some indicated that the discrimination between boys and girls leads to major ills in the society; for example, high illiteracy rate among women more than men.

"As much as the discrimination gap narrows between boys

and girls as much as we witness more development and progress in that country," said Ms. Badran. "In Arab countries, discrimination exists since birth is mostly reflected in the parents' preference to educate the boy rather than the girl."

Iraqi children's suffering due to the imposed embargo on the country and its influence on the women and children was also a topic for discussion. Sa'adoun Khalifeh, president of the Family Planning Association in Iraq, pointed out in a working paper to the wretched conditions of Iraqi children and the increasing number of deaths in the past three years.

According to Mr. Khalifeh, the number of deaths among Iraqi children reached 317,585 from 1990 until the end of June this year.

"Those who were born after the embargo do not know the taste of sweets... they only hear about them in films and pictures," he said. "There should be a humanitarian effort that would put an end to injustice and cruelty that brought death to the Iraqi children."

UNICEF's regional director, Sarojini Vittachi expressed hope that coordination and cooperation would be strengthened among governments, NGOs and the people to "monitor and implement human rights goals," and that the role of NGOs should be a complementary one to the government rather than confrontational.

Al Quds Open University denies sale report

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A committee representing the workers of the Amman-based Al Quds Open University (QOU) has denied earlier reports alleging that the university is being sold to Ahmad Tamimi, an Arab-American living in the United States, and stressed that QOU could remain as a Palestinian entity contributing to the educational objectives of the Palestinian people.

"Dr. Tamimi has reached a contract with QOU to buy its programmes which he can later market to Arab communities living in America," according to committee chairman Khaled Asanien.

He told the Jordan Times, which had published the earlier report, that sale of the university has never been contemplated and that this week's two sit in staged by some 80 QOU workers "was aimed primarily at urging the Palestinian leadership and the world community to help the university serve its status and pursue its noble mission."

"We have reason to believe the financial and other problems facing the university are on the way towards a satis-

factory solution," said Mr. Hassanien in an interview, but he declined to elaborate.

The workers, who staged the protest Tuesday, issued a statement noting that QOU, which has been providing distance education to 4,000 Palestinian students, was facing the consequences of a financial suspension of Arab and international aid since the Gulf war.

The crisis, said the statement, deprived the workers of their salaries for more than five months, denied the freelance teachers their pay, caused protraction of programmes to cease, prevented QOU from opening branches in Arab states, halted Jordan Television educational programmes beamed to Palestinian students and led to the resignation of many QOU teachers.

The statement, a copy of which was handed to the Jordan Times, noted that the workers and their families were facing a difficult time while the students future hung in balance.

It said that a memorandum listing the grievances have been sent to Palestine President Yasser Arafat urging him to give priority to finding sufficient funds for QOU programmes and pay workers their salaries. The memorandum

appealed to wealthy Palestinians and the European Community to extend aid to QOU and urged the Gulf states to release frozen funds allocated for QOU.

The QOU project, which was launched in 1985, was in response to a real need for higher education among the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the diaspora.

At the request of the Palestine National Fund (PNF) and with assistance from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, UNESCO completed the project's feasibility study in 1980 and QOU was inaugurated in late 1985.

QOU has been preparing multi-media distance education learning materials designed by academic staff and assisted by experts from local universities and from distance education institutions in other nations.

QOU, the only distance education university in the Arab World, was primarily established to serve the Palestinian students but, once resources and circumstances permitted, there were plans for enrollments from other Arab countries.

However, the current financial strait has temporarily halted expansion plans.

Israel, PLO meet in Oslo

(Continued from page 1)

tain full responsibility but would allow a symbolic Palestinian presence.

Israel warned on Friday there would be no agreement to implement Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and

Jericho before 1994.

The Oslo meeting was arranged after Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst contacted Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat when the two leaders failed to break the autonomy deadlock in

Cairo. Mr. Egeland said.

The United States and Russia, the co-sponsors of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, also asked Norway to arrange a new meeting between Israel and the PLO. Mr. Egeland said.

Mr. Egeland said the talks would focus formally on crea-

Ministry of Supply draws up new line for food subsidies

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians with a monthly income of JD 500 will not be entitled to government subsidies for rice, sugar and milk under new regulations expected to go into effect in the new year, officials said Saturday.

The Ministry of Supply is working on a mechanism to ensure that only those in the under-JD 500 monthly-income bracket would be issued coupons for the subsidised food items, the officials told the Jordan Times.

They said the income would be determined on the basis of individual incomes rather than the collective income of the family in the initial stage.

Dr. Fahed Faneek, a noted columnist and economist, said that the effect of the new system will be two-fold. On the one hand, only those under the income level will be entitled to subsidies while on the other the follow-up work involved in receiving coupons after providing necessary documents related to income and other details might discourage many others.

"This would mean that only those in actual need would actually go through the procedures to get the coupons," Dr. Faneek pointed out.

The officials said that the idea of limiting food coupons to certain income brackets and thus ensuring that subsidies reach only those who really deserve the help was mooted in 1991, a few months after the government introduced the coupons.

"It was a difficult process to determine who actually deserves the subsidies, and the formula based on JD 500 monthly individual income appears to be the best starting point," said a senior official.

"The government objective has not changed, and it will ensure that the needy among the population continue to get subsidies," the official added.

Each Jordanian adult is entitled to 1.5 kilograms of rice and 1.5 kilograms of sugar every month in addition to one kilogramme of milk powder every three months.

The subsidised rice is available at 150 fils and sugar at 170 fils per kilogramme while the open market price for both items is 360 fils per kilogramme each. One kilogramme of subsidised milk powder is available at JD 1.100 while the market price is JD 1.600.

Jordan used to spend up to JD 60 million per year for food subsidies in the late 1980s. It has gradually brought down the amount by introducing the coupons in 1990.

One of the first measures sought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the economic restructuring programme it prescribed for Jordan was the withdrawal of subsidies.

Jordan resisted IMF pressure and sought instead to reduce spending in other sectors and only gradually cut the subsidies.

Subsidies have been allocated JD 30 million in the fiscal 1994 draft budget compared with JD 36 million for 1993 and JD 43 million in 1992. The bulk of the allocation, however, goes to subsidise wheat to bakeries and households.

Officials declined comment when asked whether the government intended to increase the price of bread in 1994. Reports have indicated that the Ministry of Supply was studying the issue and might introduce an increase during the year.

One of the regular complaints raised by the officials is that there is a heavy wastage of bread in Jordan.

"Many consumers buy bread and feed it to animals since it is cheaper than fodder," said one of the officials.

Jordan now consumes more than 600,000 tonnes of wheat every year compared with 400,000 to 450,000 tonnes three years ago — an increase which is not compatible with the annual population growth as well as the sudden increase in population as a result of the return of more than 300,000 people from the Gulf after the Gulf crisis of 1990-91.

Officials admit that it is very difficult to apply regulatory measures for wheat if only because of the huge consumption and the number of consumers involved. At the same time, they also noted that regulations have kept the price of bread in Jordan the cheapest in the region.

Dr. Faneek said part of the JD 6 million reduction would be saved as a result of the new system for subsidised food.

"One element that is not very clear yet is whether fluctuations in international prices for sugar, rice and milk are reflected in the allocations for subsidies," Dr. Faneek said, pointing out that the government would be reducing its cost if the prices went down.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition artist Hana Al Dasouqi at the Student Affairs Deanship at the University of Yarmouk in Irbid.
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Ibrahim Al Abduli and Abdul Hussein Twaiz at Alla Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ali Al Sabounji at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art 93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists Khaled Hijazi, Mohammad Al Ameri, and Adnan Al Sharif at Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hani Al Hourani entitled "Impressions from Wadi Al Walah" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Samia Zaron at the Open Studio "Al Marsam Al Maftuh," Jabal Amman, 2nd Circle (9:00-13:00 and 15:00-17:00 all days except Fridays).
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrelnissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by a number of Iraqi artists at La Casa Art Gallery (between the 5th and 6th Circles).

CHRISTMAS BAZAARS

- ★ Christmas bazaar at Al Nakhbah Exhibition Hall, University Road (Tel. 837304, 684257).
- ★ Christmas bazaar at the Orthodox Club in Abdoun.
- ★ Christmas bazaar at the Amman International Auto Exhibition/Airport Road.
- ★ Christmas bazaar by Jordan River Designs at Regency Palace Hotel (10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.) (Tel. 656872).

DRAMAS

- ★ Drama entitled "Family Dispute" at the "Drama Theatre" at Yarmouk University at 12:00 and 3:00 p.m.

tion of a Palestinian police force.

The PLO representative in Norway had said on Friday night that Mr. Peres would lead the Israeli delegation and Mahmoud Abbas would head the PLO delegation.

But Mr. Egeland, one of the Norwegians who helped to

broker the PLO-Israeli accord in secret talks in Norway this year, said in an interview with NRK state radio: "I have no reason to believe that Peres will attend."

Mr. Egeland said Israel, the PLO, the United States and Russia had asked Norway to host the talks.

Jordan Times

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Haunting crossing points

OF ALL the disputes that arose between the PLO and Israel in the wake of their Sept. 13 accord on interim self-rule, the control over border crossings between Jericho and Jordan, on the one hand, and between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, on the other, may prove to be the most difficult. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is showing insensitivity to the request of the Palestinian side to exercise meaningful supervision of border points in the Jericho enclave and Gaza due to his well-known obsession with security for his country. It is of course possible that the Israeli prime minister is exhibiting toughness and inflexibility just for the sake of domestic political reasons. But the cycle of violence that surged in the wake of the Palestinian-Israeli deal has, no doubt, also complicated matters for the two sides.

The Palestinians' view is totally different from Rabin's since their control over border crossings is the least acceptable manifestation of any semblance of sovereignty over the small territories that Israel has agreed to yield to them on the basis of the Gaza-Jericho first formula. Otherwise, these tiny areas would become mere enclaves surrounded by Israeli soldiers with no apparent freedom to go one inch beyond the dictates of the Israeli military regime. Small wonder then that Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij lamented the failure of the Rabin government to give the PLO effective supervision over the border points and described the situation without such an Israeli concession as untenable for and an enslavement of his people.

Given the diametrically opposed perspectives on this thorny issue, there is a growing fear that all the accomplishments of the past three months on the Palestinian-Israeli front could unravel. From the looks of things, Rabin is not likely to budge on this matter. Likewise, PLO leader Yasser Arafat cannot afford to appear as having made yet another big concession to Israel at a time when he is already beleaguered and injured due to his signature of the Sept. 13 agreement. Two possible scenarios are left for the two parties to contemplate: Either to reach a deadlock, which is in neither party's interest, or accept a reasonable compromise that would leave both camps with some sort of coordinated control over the border crossings during the envisaged interim period. As long as what is sought for the time being is a temporary resolution of the problem, till there is final settlement of the Palestinian question, the latter option would appear the lesser evil. With this understanding in mind, the entire peace package already attained between the PLO and the Rabin government must not be allowed to slip away. There are very high stakes in the September peace accord and an important issue as the border issue should be temporarily resolved for the sake of the higher objectives of lasting peace in the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Saturday called on the Arab negotiators with Israel to re-consider the whole Middle East process because it is clear now that from its stand with regard to the Oslo deal with the PLO the Israelis are seeking to gain more time and win the world community's support for their policies which are hostile to the interests of the Arab World. Of course, the PLO leadership is to blame for signing documents considered as incomplete, ambiguous and unclear, thus opening the way for a different interpretation by the Rabin government, said the paper. It is to be regretted now that some of us have trusted the Israeli intentions and confided in the United States which served as a guarantor of the PLO-Israeli deal regarding the Gaza-Jericho first option, continued the paper. It is now clear for all that the Rabin government is striving to embarrass the PLO leadership, which can not draw back from the Oslo deal and for which it is impossible to give more concessions to the Israelis in view of the strong internal Palestinian opposition, the paper added. It seems that Israel is continuing the drive to reduce to a minimum the Palestinian gains so that it can guarantee that the autonomy rule remains an easy prey for the Israeli government and easy to control and contain, added the daily. It said that there is no alternative for the PLO leadership but to turn back to the Arab World for backing, to enable it to handle the Israeli manoeuvres and coordinate all its steps with those of other Arab parties to the peace process.

MERE TALK about a teachers' association in Jordan can by no means satisfy the teachers' needs or convince them that the government or Parliament are taking steps to help safeguard their interests, said a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. For the past three years, the teachers have been struggling to set up a union to help protect their interests and help them improve their salaries and working conditions, said Bader Abdul Haq. The reply to all this was the creation of the so-called Teachers' Club and promises by Parliament that it would work out a set of regulations helping the teachers to establish their union, said the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

How to survive Israeli competition

Normalisation of economic relations with Israel is definitely coming. It will be one of the conditions for peace between Israel and any Arab country. Therefore, we should find out whether the Jordanian industry is able to survive the competition of the Israeli industrial products or whether it will shrink and be crowded out of its markets by the Israeli industry.

To answer this crucial question we should first state four obvious facts:

First is that Israel is an industrial country and belongs to the "first world" while Jordan is a developing country of the Third World. As a rule, the manufactured products of developing countries are not able to compete on equal footing with the products of the industrialised countries without protection. Second is the fact that the Jordanian industries are not able to stand competition of foreign imports in the domestic market. That is why the Jordanian infant industry was given a customs protection of 30 per cent as a minimum and 50 per cent as a maximum. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) which is known to advocate free trade, recognised this fact and admitted that the above level of protection is justified in order for the Jordanian industry to survive.

Third is the fact that the Israeli economy is heavily subsidised. In fact, it is by far the most subsidised economy in the world. Israel receives unrequited transfers of around \$6 billion a year from various sources, prominent among whom are America and Germany. The competition between the two economies is therefore unfair.

Fourth is the fact that Israel proved during the 45 years since its inception that it is not a normal state with defined boundaries. It is rather an expansionist Zionist project. Strengthening the Israeli economy may tempt Israel to enter another round of geographic expansion bid at the expense of Arab land, either through wars or by other means.

We have no reason to volunteer to strengthen the Israeli economy and enhance its economic base until Israeli rulers prove through action not words that they have abandoned expansionary designs and converted Israel into a normal peaceful state with recognised borders, just like the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was required to abandon its charter calling for the dismantling of Israel.

If Israel needed five years of transitional period to test the intentions and good will of the Palestinians, we need the same period to make sure that Israel is no more a security threat.

These facts do not only imply the answer, they also indicate the remedy. The Jordanian industry is unable to stand the competition of the Israeli industry without protection. The remedy is to apply the custom protection measures, now in force towards all foreign imports, without giving Israeli exports any extra advantage over the imports from other trade partners, such as Germany, Japan, U.S., Turkey etc. Normalisation of economic relations should mean treating Israel like any other foreign country without discrimination: No free trade area, no common market and no custom union.

Jordan should not wait until after an accord is reached with Israel. Customs posts should be installed immediately on the bridges. The bridges must be treated as an international border point, just like our borders with Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, as far as customs and passports are concerned. This step is overdue. Any hesitation or delay will be at the expense of Jordan's national interests.

Jordan, as a sovereign state, should assert its authority on the bridges and put an end to the current situation, where Israel has been deciding, unilaterally, what is permitted and what is not to cross, and in what direction when it comes to the movement of people and goods for the last 26 years.



The violence among us

By Bernd Hüppauf

Violence and acts of brutality are going on in every corner of the world at this moment. Wars and civil wars that no one seems to have the power or determination to stop — in the former Yugoslavia, in Georgia and Azerbaijan, in Northern Ireland, in Nigeria — continue unabated. And what might be called "undeclared wars" in our cities, from Los Angeles to Johannesburg, also spiral out of control.

I do not have a solution to this pervasive manifestation of violence. But it seems to me that if we frame our idea of violence as an aberration, a deviation from the path of normality, we are making a profound error. We run the risk of unwittingly justifying neglect of whole segments of society while ignoring the increasing power of violence generated by society itself, which in modern life increasingly seems to isolate and brutalise the individual. We cannot hope to solve the problem of escalating violence until we have redefined the concept of violence and changed our perception of it.

Recent scholarship suggests that the world has never seen a region or a period without violence. In all previous cultures it appears to have been accepted as part of a natural or God-given order. Violent acts were endemic and normal.

In the 18th century, with the industrial and political revolutions and the emancipation of the individual, perceptions changed: the Enlightenment "denaturalised" violence. It became unacceptable in society, and as it could not be justified before the court of reason, the objective of a society free from violence began to

emerge. People began to speak of a utopia: a civilised society (to use Kant's phrase) in eternal peace.

But this denaturalisation of violence required a new concept of "legitimate" violence. The end of its natural history led to the emancipation of violence from mythical and religious significance. Violence was turned into a means; it was freed from traditional limits, and, now defined as a response to unlawful rule and domination, it was justified even before the court of reason.

This legitimisation of violence produced not only the "other" — the perpetrator of "bad" violence — but gave rise to the pervasive forms of violence we think of as characteristic of modern life. This ubiquitous aggression, which we may experience at home, in a factory or at school, has been called structural violence.

By the end of the 19th century, production had become conflated with destruction, and the economies of industrial societies were increasingly based on the destruction of landscapes, lives and property. Technology provided the pattern not only for economic progress but also modern warfare. Consider typical photographs from World War I. With the proud gestures of factory owners or of merchants in front of their stores, German officers posed on huge piles of rubble. Standing on the ruins of blown-up houses and forts, these officers demonstrated to the viewer the astounding success of modern armaments, made possible with the latest technological innovations.

At the same time, we find it psychologically difficult to accept that violence is the product of our own making. The disbelief that wars and brutal

acts are still possible in our world is part of our distress when reading the news about violence in Yugoslavia, Somalia or the far side of our town.

As long as we maintain the concept of western history as one of a civilisation moving from barbaric violence to rationality and peace, open and brutal violence is perceived as part of another world — one that was once beyond the northern border of Greece, where the barbarians lived, and is now beyond the border of our own civilisation or the walls of our own home, where the others live.

These others are distanced by space and time. They are societies of the East or the South, people in the poor and uneducated quarters of our cities. From this perspective, violence becomes an intruder from an outer sphere and is present in our world by default, as an exception, a deplorable relic in an otherwise civilised system.

But is there really a difference between a sniper taking aim above a Sarajevo street and a frustrated worker in Detroit who pulls his gun, between looting an aid convoy in Mogadishu and drug dealing in affluent quarters of New York, between a rape here and a rape there? The dividing line we like to draw between ourselves and those who we fear is an illusion: violence is as much a part of each of us as it is of our society.

As long as we hold the view that violence belongs to times and places that are not ours, or to early childhood before we are properly socialised, we are victims of a perception incongruous with the reality in which we live. Our idea of modernity — and as a result, our perception of ourselves and our world

— could turn out to be untenable.

To abandon the idea that western civilisation is en route to a world of peace does harm to our pride, but we must take a sceptical view of the possibility of eradicating war and violence. Yet accepting that the world will not be free from violence is not the same as accepting violence. Paradoxically, letting go of the ideal of eternal peace may increase our ability to make peace.

"The Israelis and the Palestinian peoples who fought each other for almost a century have agreed to move decisively on the path of dialogue, understanding and cooperation.... I want to tell the Palestinian delegation that we are sincere, that we mean business...." "We will need more courage and determination to continue the course of building co-existence and peace between us.... Such a shift will give us an opportunity to embark upon the process of economic, social and cultural growth and development."

These statements, the first by Shimon Peres and the second by Yasser Arafat, made at the signing of the Middle East pact on Sept. 13, were concrete and practical; they did not refer to a vision of a world free from violence and war.

It is not the time now to echo the grand vision of human perfectibility and historical progression. The end of the utopian ideal of eternal peace should not only be interpreted as a loss but also as an act of liberation. It is time that new insights into the violence structure of our psyche and of modern society be turned to committing concrete and localised acts of peace — The New York Times.

Dynamics of peace — give and take which could bring conciliation

By Michael Jensen

THE POSTPONEMENT from Dec. 12 to Dec. 22-23 and then the postponement for at least "three weeks", in the estimate of Israeli officials, of the signing of an agreement between the PLO and Israel on implementation of the Declaration of Principles negotiated in Oslo and signed in Washington on Sept. 13 has more to do with traditional Zionist/Israeli claims to the "land" of Palestine than the preservation of "Israeli survival" and "Israeli security."

Israel is, and has been for three decades, the predominant military power in the Middle East. Its "survival", therefore, has not been a real issue since the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, and even then the fledgling Jewish state was not fighting for its existence from a position of weakness vis-à-vis its Arab neighbours but from a position of strength.

But because Israelis define the "security" of their state as the ability of Israeli military and police forces to guarantee the safety of all Jews living within the territories Israel controls, Israeli leaders claim that the "security of the Jewish state is under threat" if Jews are being threatened, assaulted and killed by Palestinians. And this threat provides an excuse for postponement.

ing over territory to the Palestinians means a renunciation of sovereignty over such territory.

The second aspect is the size of the Jericho enclave. This also involves sovereignty. Israel is prepared to cede the Jericho municipality and the neighbouring, largely empty, refugee camps amounting to 35 square kilometres of territory. But the PLO demands the hand-over of the entire Jericho subdistrict, defined during the British mandate, of some 350 square kilometres. A Palestinian entity in the West Bank comprising 350 square kilometres could claim the attribute of sovereignty while a city enclave of only 35 square kilometres could not.

The third aspect is control over roads used by Jewish settlers in both the West Bank and Gaza and the fourth is the Israeli army's right of pursuit of Palestinian activists into Palestinian-held areas after the Israeli withdrawal. Both involve sovereignty.

The other issue which causes Israel problems in the negotiations with the PLO is the problem of defining boundaries, deciding where Israel begins and ends. Since the Versailles Peace conference in 1919, at which the Zionists presented maps of their future state, they have been extremely reluctant to delineate the precise bound-

"The Israelis have not yet realised that the Arabs' price for peace is return of land the Israelis cannot imagine themselves relinquishing. They continue to believe that they can make a deal without giving up control and sovereignty over 'The Land'. This is why on Dec. 13 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to make a conciliatory or compensatory gesture towards the Palestinians in order to maintain momentum in the peace process. He and his colleagues still do not understand the dynamics of peacemaking, the process of give and take which would bring peace and conciliation."

The method of defining threat — and regarding security — masks an historical Zionist/Israeli mind-set on the issue of "the land of Israel" which governs the thinking of a majority of Israelis and the key figures in the present Labour-led coalition. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres belong to the independence generation of Israeli leaders for whom "land" acquired by Jews became inalienably "Jewish", holy "land" promised the Jews by their tribal God, Yahweh.

There is a solid psychological barrier in the minds of such men to handing over any land, even one inch of land, to the Palestinians. So they, following in the footsteps of the nationalist camp led by the Likud, can be expected to resist for as long as possible the transfer of control over territory, any portion of the land to the PLO.

There are a number of aspects to control, all of which involve sovereignty. The person who pointed out this fact was Shulamit Aloni, head of the Meretz Party, the most concessionist faction in the present Israeli coalition. And even she was not prepared to grant the PLO "sovereignty" over any portion of the land which Israel claims.

The first aspect is control of the crossing points from the neighbouring Arab countries into Gaza and the West Bank. Israel says it should retain control, citing the agreement at Oslo that Israel should be in charge of external security. The PLO, however, says that Israel should not be in a position to open and close the doors to the territories. Therefore, there should be joint Israeli, PLO and international control. Israel has rejected this idea because it wants to use its control of the frontiers of the territories through the stationing of forces along those frontiers to maintain its sovereignty over those territories.

Israeli spokesmen make their intentions crystal clear when they say that they must decide who enters Israel through the crossing points. The Israelis have not yet got it into their heads that hand-

aries of that state. And to complicate matters, various political parties have laid claim to different tracts of territory. Thus, the dominant Herut faction of the Likud claims the East as well as the West Bank of the Jordan and Lebanese territory containing the headwaters of the Jordan River while ideologues of the right-wing Tehiya Party, which had ministerial posts in the last Likud government, would like to reconquer Sinai.

One of the founding fathers of the Jewish state, Norman Bentwich, said that the borders of Israel should be like the skin of an animal which expands in times of plenty and shrinks in times of want. Any handover of territory to the Palestinians signifies not only shrinkage but an eventual drawing of boundaries limiting the expansion of the skin of the Jewish state and challenging the mind-set of the majority of Israelis and their leaders.

The Israelis have not yet realised that the Arabs' price for peace is return of land the Israelis cannot imagine themselves relinquishing. They continue to believe that they can make a deal without giving up control and sovereignty over "The Land". This is why on Dec. 13 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to make a conciliatory or compensatory gesture towards the Palestinians — by releasing prisoners or making a token withdrawal — in order to maintain the momentum in the peace process. He and his colleagues still do not understand the dynamics of peacemaking, the process of give and take which could bring peace and conciliation.

And Israel's refusal to come to terms and act in accordance with what can be called the "spirit" of making peace cannot but have a negative impact on negotiations between the Jewish state and its other Arab interlocutors. Prevarication and procrastination do not create a climate of confidence. As the Palestinian problem is the core of the Arab dispute with Israel, lack of progress on the Palestinian track could mean stalemate on the other three tracks in the negotiations.

مركز الصحافة

Features

Conservation of architectural heritage is a duty for all

By Samer G. Bagaean

AMMAN — The symposium on the Conservation of Architectural Heritage in Jordan and the Arab World concluded, Nov. 24, at the University of Jordan's Department of Architecture and Engineering Faculty.

The introductory paper scrutinised the criteria by which sites were selected for inclusion on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Other papers examined the urban aspects of conservation at the neighbourhood and city levels.

in processes such as conservation as a social development process were cited with reference to particular international experiences.

The subject of public interaction with either conservation or preservation was raised over and over again by many of the speakers. Questions raised included: How can people — the public — be aware of heritage and conservation and contribute to the debate when the forums through which they can express either pleasure or displeasure do not exist? or: Why is it that where these forums exist, they are not easily accessible?

Decentralisation of decision-making processes in our cities and the adoption of flexible visions for future urban expansion instead of an inflexible master plan were proposed as the alternative vision. This new vision also promises to chart future progress within the social and economic domains that will supplement this future expansion.

1993: An historic breakthrough toward peace in N. Ireland

By Allen Nacheman
Agence France Presse

LONDON — Britain's admission in late November that it had, contrary to all public vows, been secretly dealing with the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) for most of 1993 hit like a thunderbolt. It forced Prime Minister John Major to eat the words he had uttered with indignation in the House of Commons only weeks earlier, that talking with the IRA "would turn my stomach."

having been kept in the dark about the IRA talks, and worse, at learning that London had been passing information about their own private meetings on to the IRA.

The IRA and the government traded insults and accusations, posturing for the public relations high ground, each claiming the other had initiated the secret talks.



another Unionist hardliner. "So it's understandable that some people are turning to violence to defend the union. If they believe that the British are about to abandon them, you can expect more violence."

Politics muddy efforts to save dolphins

By Penelope Hocking-Vigie
Reuters

ANTIBES, France — Red tape and politics are hampering efforts to save thousands of Mediterranean dolphins that die each year in lethal drift-nets.

The proposed sanctuary would be bounded by the French Riviera, Italy's Ligure coast and Corsica. However, the signatory countries lack the legislation necessary to police it.

sections of the U.S. convention to support a treaty banning drift-net fishing within the sanctuary.

Algerian presidency

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kebir also demanded the lifting of laws passed during nearly two years of emergency rule, setting up a consultative group of government and opposition members, trying those responsible for repression against the opposition, and talks with the FIS in a general venue.

democracy, derailed when the election was cancelled.

The official APS news agency appeared to exclude direct talks with the FIS but was open to the possibility of talks with its supporters.

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JPMC hereby announces that the closing date for submission of bids has been extended until 14:00 hours local time Monday, Feb. 7, 1994.
Sameh Madani
Managing Director

'American interest in Islam growing'

By Rosalind M. d'ine Murphy

WASHINGTON — Interest in learning more about Islam and the Muslim community is growing in the United States, two advocates of interfaith relations said December 13. This interest, they say, has been spawned by heightened awareness of the need for understanding and dialogue among religious groups in America.

For Mr. Gell, education is the key. "It is important for Americans to understand" Koranic teachings and Islam's "basis of religious tolerance," he said. Therefore, "much more has to be done" to educate Americans about the Muslim community, especially through "promoting interfaith dialogue... the more Muslims can interact with the general community... the more Americans will understand" them.

Participants in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the UAE raised the issue of President Clinton's recent meeting with British author Salman Rushdie in the context of interfaith understanding. (Rushdie is under an Iranian death sentence for blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses.")

While a lack of understanding of Islam and the Muslim community persists in the United States, "great progress" is being made to reverse the problem of intolerance.

"Islam is a very tolerant religion, but that is not what we are actively doing in Muslim countries," Mr. Malik said. There ought to be "greater intra-tolerance" among Muslims in the United States and throughout the Muslim world, he added. Muslims ought to discuss problems in the community "among ourselves and through democratic means... (we) must be prepared to look hard at ourselves — then we will be able to relate to others in a more informed manner."

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Shelling reported in Bosnia as Croats release more prisoners

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Fighting with heavy arms has persisted in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, while shelling lessened in the capital Sarajevo and the breakaway Muslim enclave of Bihac, in the north-west, a U.N. spokesman said Saturday.

U.N. military observers meanwhile were to inspect the Rajlovac and Grbavica districts in northwestern Sarajevo later Saturday following reports that front lines had changed there after several days of heavy fighting, said Major Idebald Van Biesebeek of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Some 2,000 shells fell Friday between Gracanica and Doboj, about 100 kilometres north of here, where Bosnian Serb forces are fighting Muslim-led Bosnian government forces, the spokesman said.

He also reported artillery and tank fire near Kalesija, east of Tuzla, near the border with Serbia.

But in Sarajevo, "tension lessened" after intense shelling in the past few days, the spokesman said.

Clashes between the Bosnian army and secessionist forces in Bihac also decreased.

Croat forces meanwhile released 101 Muslim prisoners from the Rodoc Prison Camp, in the southern Mostar region,

he said.

As in the past, the release was overseen by the International Committee of the Red Cross with logistic support from UNPROFOR's Spanish contingent.

Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban said Saturday he expected the world to press the Muslim-led army into freeing Croat war prisoners after his forces released more than 1,000 Muslims unilaterally this week.

"It will be clear now who is who in Bosnia, in moral and every other respect," Mr. Boban told Croatian state radio. "I am sure the Muslims will react positively to our decision."

He said he was sure the international community would now lean on the mostly Muslim Bosnian army to free detained Croats as a reciprocal gesture.

Croatian Radio reported Friday night that the Bosnian Croat Defence Council (HVO) had released all remaining Muslim prisoners of war and closed detention centres in HVO-held southwest Bosnia.

In Belgrade, political sources said Serbia's ruling Socialist Party could be denied a majority in Sunday's elections and may form a government coalition with the moderate opposition.

Opinion polls have been banned during the election campaign but newspapers said surveys showed the Socialists, led by President Slobodan Milosevic, would have the largest number of seats.

According to the forecast, the DEPOS opposition group would replace the strongly nationalist Radical Party, a former Milosevic ally, as the second largest faction in parliament.

Even without a working majority of his own, the president appeared eager to retain his grip on power despite growing unpopularity over the economic catastrophe that has overtaken the economy under international sanctions.

"Milosevic doesn't go into elections in order to lose," a political source said Saturday.

The general election, the second in Serbia in a year, is being held at a crucial juncture in international negotiations to end the civil war between Muslims, Serbs and Croats in neighbouring Bosnia.

U.N. and European Community envoys met Mr. Milosevic and Croatian government representatives near Belgrade Friday to discuss plans to partition Bosnia into three ethnic states.

There is speculation in the

Serbian capital that Mr. Milosevic has convinced Bosnian Serbs to cede extra territory to the proposed Muslim state in order to coax the U.N. into easing its oil trade sanctions against Serbia.

The warring sides will meet the international negotiators in Geneva Tuesday and EC foreign ministers in Brussels the following day.

Mr. Milosevic, casting himself in the guise of peacemaker, has worked hard to shed his international image as the architect of the territorial wars fought by Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia since their independence from former Yugoslavia.

The conflicts have brought close his ambition to unite all Serbs in a greater Serbia, a goal underwritten by all the main parties contesting the elections.

But they have been pursued at the cost of retaliatory U.N. sanctions that have destroyed Serbia's economy in a whirlwind of hyperinflation, industrial collapse and crime.

Getting the sanctions eased will be the first priority of Milosevic's next government though many fear he could be forced to resort to a state of emergency within weeks as the economy continues to deteriorate.



Members of Taiwan's opposition party Saturday struggle with riot police in Taipei in an attempt to force themselves into a meeting hall where the China — Taiwan talks are held (AFP photo)

Taiwan, China start talks amid protest

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwanese and Chinese negotiators, meeting in Taiwan for the first time ever, began a six-day round of talks Saturday as riot police scuffled with screaming protesters in the street outside.

Negotiators wrangled over provisions of a pact for the repatriation of Chinese asylum-seekers who have hijacked nine airliners to Taipei since April this year. The hijackings have become a major irritant in relations.

Taipei's nationalist government, which lost the Chinese civil war in 1949, has said it is willing to send back the hijackers but has insisted they first be tried in Taiwan and that China promise not to try them a second time.

China has refused to accept the conditions, accusing Taiwan of indirectly encouraging the hijackings by refusing to send back suspects immediately and unconditionally.

Previous talks were held in Singapore and China earlier this year. But the Taipei talks brought the first visit of a Chinese negotiating team to Taiwan, marking a gradual thawing in relations since the late 1980s.

More than 200 members of the main opposition democratic Progressive Party, which wants Taiwan to abandon its official goal of reunification with China, scuffled with club-wielding riot police outside the talks in a Taipei office building.

The demonstrators, carrying banners reading "don't sell out Taiwan", said they feared their government could use the talks to move towards reunification without consulting the island's 21 million people.

No firm agreements were reached on the first day of the talks, which will also discuss fishing disputes and ways to

speed up repatriation of 2,482 illegal Chinese immigrants from Taiwan.

The two sides remained far apart on issues such as whether all hijackers should be sent back without exception and the time period which could elapse between any future hijackings and the repatriation of suspects.

Hsu Hwei-Yow, the chief Taiwanese negotiator, said Taiwan wanted to reserve the right not to repatriate some hijackers if they had valid political or religious motives.

He also said Taiwan could not accept a 15-day time limit for repatriation as demanded by China.

Chinese negotiator Sun Yafu told a news conference: "Hijacking is a serious criminal offence. Hijackers should be dealt with according to their behaviour not according to their motives."

Heavy fighting reported in Angola

LUANDA (R) — Angola's government Saturday reported heavy fighting with UNITA rebels north of the capital Luanda and in other parts of the country as peace talks remained stalled.

Military sources said there were intense clashes some 100 kilometres northeast of Luanda near the strategically lo-

cated town of Canacassala, which had been captured by UNITA earlier in the week.

The sources also reported fighting in the town of Mona Quimundo in eastern Luanda Sul Province and rebel troop movement near the besieged provincial capitals of Cuito and Meungue, in the centre and south.

No more details were immediately available. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

Diplomats in Luanda said month-long peace talks with UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in the Zambian capital Lusaka were stalled and were unlikely to produce any agreement before Christmas.

Pakistani court charges Bhutto's brother

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — A special court Saturday charged Murtaza Bhutto, the jailed brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, with insurgency and attempting to topple the government by force.

"The prosecution has enough evidence to establish the involvement of the accused in the case," said the judge at the special court for speedy trials in the southern city of Karachi.

The court brought four charges against Murtaza Bhutto, younger brother of the prime minister, accusing him of insurgency, activities to destabilise by force the government of Pakistan, spreading hatred and rebellion against the state and provoking anti-state activities.

Murtaza and 14 co-accused pleaded not guilty to the charges, which carry a max-

imum penalty of death and which include involvement in the hijacking of an airliner to Kabul and Damascus in 1981 in which one man was killed.

The 39-year-old Murtaza was arrested on Nov. 3 on his return from Syria after 16 years of self-imposed exile and has been held without bail in a Karachi jail awaiting formal charges.

He had not returned to Pakistan since his father, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was toppled in a military coup in 1977.

He has been accused of masterminding an underground group, Al-Zulfikar, set up after his father was hanged in 1979. The group has been blamed for bombings in several Pakistani cities.

Murtaza's return has provoked an embarrassing rift within the Bhutto family and threatens to split the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The prime minister ousted her mother, Nurat Bhutto, as PPP chairwoman this month because of Nurat's support to Murtaza in last October's elections.

"I have my differences," Nurat Bhutto told reporters at the court when asked if a brief meeting with her daughter at a function Friday marked the mending of fences with Benazir.

"I am still the chairwoman of the party and will continue to act as such," Nurat said. But Murtaza ruled out any quick reconciliation after Friday's meeting. "It was only an informal chat," he said. "What we need is negotiations on the issue of party leadership."

N. Korea will accept U.S. nuclear proposal with few reservations—report

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Monday will respond positively but with a "few reservations" to a counter offer by Washington on inspection of its nuclear facilities, a Seoul daily said Saturday.

The Kyunghyang Daily, in a front page story, quoted an unnamed diplomatic source in Washington as saying that "with very few reservations, North Korea will convey its acceptance of the U.S. proposal."

The message will be conveyed during an unofficial working-level contact Monday in New York, the daily said, without detailing the reservations. But it linked the reported new flexibility on the nuclear issue to recent policy changes in Pyongyang.

A meeting of the North's Supreme People's Assembly on Dec. 9 put priority on trade, in a move seen by analysts here as indicating a slight shift towards openness by the hitherto closed and rigidly self-reliant Stalinist society.

Unconfirmed reports had said Washington, at the last working-level contact between the two on Dec. 10, offered to halt annual joint South Korean

U.S. military Team Spirit exercises the moment an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team arrived in Pyongyang.

The offer was conditional on the North agreeing to IAEA inspection of all seven of its nuclear facilities and a promise to reopen talks with the South and exchange special envoys.

One week earlier, on Dec. 3, North Korea had said it would accept inspection of five of its seven nuclear facilities, but not a nuclear reactor and a laboratory at Yongbyon, the two most suspect facilities.

The Kyunghyang report came after a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman charged Friday that Washington was putting "artificial obstacles" in the way of bilateral talks, and that it would never yield to U.S. pressure over its alleged programme to produce a nuclear weapon.

"It entirely depends on the U.S. attitude whether the third round of talks are held and the nuclear problem is solved," Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the spokesman as saying.

In the Dec. 10 meeting, Washington had insisted on a return to dialogue between the

two Koreas as a precondition for the third round, KCNA said.

"We cannot but be surprised at the fact that the United States is laying artificial obstacles again, by connecting the exchange of special envoys between the North and the South," the spokesman said.

"If the United States continues to resort to pressure and delaying tactics without showing concern with the progress of the dialogue, it is hard to expect an agreement," he said, adding that "we showed the utmost lenience we could offer at the present stage."

The agency also quoted the official daily Rodong Sinmun as warning that North Korea was "resolved and fully prepared" to meet the worst situation, such as sanctions and war.

The United States has threatened to seek U.N. sanctions against North Korea if the dialogue fails to resolve the nuclear dispute, and possible cooperation with Pyongyang if it is resolved peacefully.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali is expected in Pyongyang on Dec. 24, the first ever visit to North Korea by a U.N. chief.

Becker ties the knot

LEIMEN, Germany (AFP) — Three-times Wimbledon tennis champion Boris Becker married 26-year-old model Barbara Felts here Friday. The news ends months of speculation on their possible tying of the knot. Felts is expecting their first baby. During the marriage ceremony, about 300 people waited outside Leimen Town Hall, near Heidelberg in south west Germany, despite the heavy rain.

Charlie Chaplin hat, stick sold at auction

LONDON (AFP) — A hat and walking stick belonging to late actor Charlie Chaplin were sold at auction here for £55,000 (\$83,000). The hat and stick, the trade-marks of the silent movie comedian, were sold by a Danish businessman to an anonymous buyer. Charlie Chaplin died in 1977.

U.K. clamps down on drunk-driving

LONDON (R) — Two British drunk-drive offenders, whose recklessness led to the death of their passengers, had their original sentences increased Friday as Britain clamped down on drunk-driving. In what was seen as a test case, Peter Shepherd, 29, had his original sentence of a fine and two-year driving ban increased to three months in prison, and Robert Wernet, 27, had his jail sentence doubled to 18 months. Lord Chief Justice Taylor, Britain's senior judge who handed down the new sentences, said that motorists who kill people in the worst drink-driving cases should face jail sentences near the maximum of 10 years.

Shepherd and Wernet escaped the stiffer jail terms because they committed the offences before the maximum sentence was doubled to 10 years in August this year. But relatives of drunk-drive victims and anti-drunk-driving campaigners were unimpressed by the new sentences. "It's almost a green light for drunken drivers to go on killing people with the law hardly taking any notice of them," said John Knight, of the Campaign Against Drinking and Driving.

Don't give me a home with a buffalo aroma

DURHAM, New Hampshire (R) — Hamburgers may be the all-American meal, but residents of a New Hampshire town are turning up their noses at buffalo burgers, blocking plans to open restaurant in their neighbourhood. The novel burgers are the brainchild of David Langley, who runs a buffalo farm in the town and plans to open a restaurant serving buffalo meat as an alternative to beef. But the plan ran into opposition when five of Mr. Langley's neighbours filed suit against the town to block it, charging that the smell of sizzling buffalo burgers would be offensive in a residential zone.

But where do you put the presents?

LONDON (R) — A leading British gallery whose previous exhibits include a file of bricks and a roomful of rice has revived a debate about modern art by giving pride of place to an upside-down Christmas tree. The Tate Gallery in London marked the festive season by commissioning a 22-foot (6.7-metre) fir tree from Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary. It hangs upside down from the lobby ceiling with its tip touching the floor. The roots, covered in gold leaf, crown the otherwise unadorned tree. A gallery statement Friday called it "a tree floating in air with the roots free from their earthly constraints."

Funny, but I don't recall him being that bald

NEW YORK (R) — suspicious-looking U.S. dollar bills, some of which feature an excessively bald George Washington, aren't counterfeit — just new, federal officials say. For weeks sceptical merchants have been asking the U.S. Secret Service about bills that differ in subtle ways from old ones — with a slightly balding George Washington on a white dot under the eye of the country's first president. Small numbers on the front of the bill have been removed, and other numbers on the back have been moved slightly. The changes were made in June 1992 when the government introduced a new press that triples the output of bills.

Japanese elections 'could be held in January'

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's 511-member lower house of parliament could be dissolved in January for general elections, an opposition leader was quoted as saying Saturday.

Yoshi Kono, president of the former ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), made the prediction in a speech in Hiroshima prefecture, western Japan, Jiji Press said.

"The situation surrounding the economy and other areas is very serious. An unemployment issue is expected to emerge after the turn of the year," Kono said.

"I'm sure opinions will increase" to seek a change, the LDP leader said.

His remarks were understood by observers to indicate that the lower house might be dissolved in late January, Jiji said.

Mr. Kono bitterly criticised Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, who decided Friday to postpone compiling the government's new year budget until early 1994.

"It's the worst of recent poli-

tical decisions. It will certainly give a minus effect on the economy and invite international criticism," the LDP president said.

Normally the Japanese government completes drafting a new year budget in December, and parliament approves bills on the budget before the new fiscal year starts in April.

Mr. Kono said emergency measures were needed now to cope with the "serious" economic slump in Japan.

He said the Hosokawa cabinet could collapse after general elections.

"He must make efforts not only for political reform but also for others. It will become difficult for Hosokawa to stay in power," Mr. Kono said.

In an apparent effort to pass political reform bills through parliament, Mr. Hosokawa extended the extraordinary parliament session, due to end Wednesday, by 45 days, to Jan. 29.

Mr. Hosokawa has indicated that he would resign as prime minister if he failed to win parliament's final approval of

the political reform bills before the end of this year.

The bills are now before the upper house after being approved by the lower chamber.

The LDP lost its 38-year grip on Japanese politics after suffering a setback in general elections held in July for the powerful lower house.

Following the LDP's election defeat, seven parties formed a coalition cabinet, led by Mr. Hosokawa, in August.

Mr. Hosokawa has dropped plans to tour Europe in mid-January, due to his tight schedule in parliament, the Japan Broadcasting Corp. reported Saturday.

Mr. Hosokawa had been considering meeting French President Francois Mitterrand, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Italian Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi during a tour of unspecified European nations, the national network said.

He had hoped to meet these leaders ahead of the annual group-of-seven industrial

countries summit to be held in Napoli in July, said the network.

It added that Mr. Hosokawa will stay out of the diplomatic limelight until a meeting he hoped to have with U.S. President Bill Clinton in mid-January.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali arrived here Saturday for a five-day official visit to Japan on his way to South Korea.

The U.N. chief is to meet Mr. Hosokawa and Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata Monday, officials said.

Their talks are expected to centre on a greater U.N. role, U.N. peacekeeping activities in the former Yugoslavia and North Korea's suspected nuclear development, government sources said.

While in Tokyo, Dr. Ghali is also to meet Japan's Emperor Akihito and ruling and opposition party leaders, officials said.

The U.N. secretary-general will leave Japan Wednesday for South Korea.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IRA debates peace plan, truce

BELFAST (R) — Dozens of IRA units met in secret all over Ireland Saturday divided over whether to heed an Anglo-Irish appeal to lay down their arms in return for a voice in political peace talks. But Republican sources said the IRA activists were likely to agree on their customary Christmas ceasefire while they argued about ending a 25-year war against British rule. "A Christmas truce is likely but the idea of a complete end will take much longer to debate. The Christmas ceasefire could be announced on Dec. 24," a source close to the IRA said. The sources said the meetings involved grassroots activists who would pass on their decisions to the IRA's governing army council, which could meet overhedge four weeks to give its verdict on the proposals. The meetings are being held on both sides of a border the IRA wants to eliminate to unite the British-ruled and Protestant dominated province with the Catholic Irish Republic. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) activists are studying a statement by Britain and Ireland last Wednesday billed an historic opportunity to end one of the world's longest civil wars.

Kiev sticks to military demands

MOSCOW (AFP) — Ukraine kept up demands for security guarantees and compensation over its nuclear arsenal in talks with a U.S.-Russian delegation hoping to resolve a standoff over the republic's strategic missiles, news agencies reported Saturday. The Interfax News Agency said that Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Valeri Shmarov and Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko had insisted that the security guarantees must be met by Moscow and Washington before it would agree to dismantle the 46 long-range SS-24 missiles on Ukrainian territory. The ministers also reiterated demands for financial compensation. The three sides agreed to continue their discussions, but did not announce a new date, according to Interfax. The delegation, led by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Mamedov, U.S. special envoy Strobe Talbott and U.S. Under-Secretary for Defence William Perry, was dispatched Thursday to Kiev as U.S. Vice President Al Gore said here that Washington and Russia shared "a strong feeling that this matter needs to be resolved."

U.S. gunman kills 2, then himself

HUGO, Oklahoma (AFP) — A gunman opened fire in the parking lot of a shopping centre, killing a married couple before turning the gun and taking his own life, police said. Three others were wounded in the shooting spree outside a Wal-Mart store near Hugo, in southeast Oklahoma. The gunman was identified as David Rilyn. Using a semi-automatic rifle, he killed Luke Sheehan, 52, and his wife Mary Sheehan, then drove a short distance and committed suicide in his truck, said the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. Authorities said a motive for the shooting had not been established, backing away from an earlier theory that the gunman knew the couple. One person was wounded by a bullet and two others were injured by flying glass. Assistant District Attorney Larry Grant said Mr. Flinn went to the local sheriff's office early Friday with a complaint about a dog and became impatient, saying, "I'll prosecute this myself." The official said Mr. Flinn purchased the rifle earlier in the day at a pawnshop, lying on the application about his criminal record. He had been convicted on assault and property crimes charges in California.

Italian mafia plotted to kill magistrate

ROME (R) — Investigators have discovered a plot to kill Sicily's chief anti-mafia magistrate, the Italian News Agency (ANSA) said. The news came as anti-Mafia authorities claimed a major victory against organised crime in eastern Sicily, rounding up some 93 people in a sweep involving 1,000 police and troops. ANSA said news of the suspected plot to kill Palermo Chief Prosecutor Giancarlo Caselli was contained in a parliamentary report on the mafia. A section of the parliamentary report said investigators had received information about plans for a "grave attack" against Mr. Caselli using "an electronic system," the agency said. This was apparently a reference to a remote-control bomb. The mafia had apparently intended to kill Mr. Caselli during a visit to northern Italy. There were no further details.

Toll in Argentine unrest rises to 9

SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO, Argentina (AFP) — Army troops patrolled the streets here in the wake of riots that the hospital said left nine people dead and more than 100 injured. Meanwhile a special government envoy sent to the impoverished region arrived and promised government workers would be paid back wages. The death toll rose to nine in 36 hours of rioting by the workers in the northwestern provincial capital, said Luis Muratore Montefinos, of the Santiago Del Estero Regional Hospital. On Thursday, thousands of demonstrators, many of them government employees who have gone unpaid for three months, took over government headquarters in this northwestern provincial capital, setting fire to furniture and buildings and stoning police. Other public buildings and private homes were looted and burned during the unrest in this city of 300,000 people. Most victims died of gunshot or knife wounds or injuries due to beatings, Muratore Montefinos said, warning that the death toll could rise because many of the wounded were seriously injured.

Left rallies round Mitterrand

PARIS (R) — Socialists rallied behind President Francois Mitterrand Saturday in a row over funding of private schools, accusing France's centre-right government of trying to shatter the delicate sharing of power known as "cohabitation." The Socialist president, in his first serious clash with the conservative government, Friday attacked it for rushing a law through parliament removing limits on state aid to mainly Catholic private schools. Seizing an opportunity to rally the left, which has been in disarray since an election defeat last March, Socialist chiefs followed Mr. Mitterrand's lead Saturday in promoting secular, public education. "We can only feel wounded at the way... the government has dug up the hatchet, destroying an old consensus (on education)," Socialist former Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, a close friend of Mr. Mitterrand, told Reuters. "This decision... goes beyond the issue of private schooling and signals a return to the spirit of Vichy in our institutions," he said, referring to the collaborationist government that ruled over the unoccupied part of France in 1940-44. "All those who believe in the virtues of the republic must mobilise themselves," Mr. Dumas said. Both Mr. Dumas and Socialist Party leader Michel Rocard took part in demonstrations against the new law staged by striking teachers and schoolchildren throughout France Friday.

Olympic skiing champion ends World Cup jinx

VAL GARDENA, Italy (R) — Austrian Olympic Champion Patrick Ortlieb ended a frustrating six-year wait when he won a downhill Saturday, his first victory on Alpine skiing's World Cup circuit.

It was sweet revenge for the burly man from the mountain resort of Lech, set for success in a downhill here Friday until the course conditions eased and allowed a series of higher starters to push him down to sixth.

"I'm not going to start celebrating until number 75 (Alphonse Gomis of Senegal) has skied," a wary Ortlieb told reporters at the finish line after clocking a time of two minutes 04.14 seconds on the Sas-long Piste.

French racer Jean-Luc Cretier, with start number 37, gave the Olympic downhill champion a scare but he had to settle for third place in 2:04.66, his best ever result.

Veteran Swiss downhiller Daniel Mahrer finished second in 2:04.55.

Little-known Markus Foser of Liechtenstein, who caused a sensation when winning from start number 66 Friday, could

not repeat his heroics but skied well enough to clock 2:05.19.

"I knew it was only a matter of time before I won a world cup race and it's nice to succeed on such a prestigious course as this," Ortlieb said.

"I was pleased with how I skied on Friday and I knew that I only lost then because the weather conditions changed," added the Austrian, second here in 1988 and third last year.

"It was tough on the nerves at the finishing line but I relaxed a little after (Marc) Girardelli had raced," said the 26-year-old, in his sixth season on the circuit.

Five times World Cup winner Girardelli finished 13th, over a second slower than Ortlieb after taking third place behind unknown foser and Austrian Werner Franz Friday.

"The race today was much fairer and faster," added Ortlieb whose winning time was almost five seconds quicker than that of Foser.

Foser's unlikely win had been put down to a drop in the wind and the effects of the sun on the 3,446 metre piste. But the Liechten-

stein man's 12th place Saturday, from start number seven, proved it had not been a complete fluke. Franz finished down in 23rd.

Ortlieb's victory means the \$1 million bounty offered to the man winning the five classic downhill — in Val d'Isere, Val Gardena, Kitzbuehel, Wengen and Garmisch — will go unclaimed this season.

Friday's race here replaced one cancelled in Val d'Isere last weekend and thus counted as one of the Grand Slam five.

The 31-year-old Mahrer was happy with his second place.

"A top three finish was my aim for December. I'm pleased because I never do especially well on this hill," he said.

The result in part compensated for the poor form of World Cup downhill champion Franz Heinzer, who could manage only 27th spot after his disastrous 58th Friday. Heinzer's showing can in part be blamed on a niggling thigh strain.

"My Swiss team mates will be back on song for the downhill in January," Mahrer promised.

Cretier was Saturday's surprise package, the double French downhill champion finally taking a place on a World Cup podium.

"This is a dream for me. Producing a result like this takes such a weight off my shoulders," he said. "I think we can expect a very strong showing from the French men this season."

Canadian Rob Boyd repeated Friday's fourth place ahead of Italians Kristian Ghedina and Pietro Vitalini.

Norwegian all-rounder Kjetil-Andre Aamodt finished eighth to stretch his lead over Austrian Guenther Mader in the World Cup standings to 45 points.

Aamodt has 389 points while Mader, 29th on Saturday, has 344.

The scene now switches to the nearby Dolomite Resort of Alta Badia Sunday for a giant slalom in which Italian hero Alberto Tomba attempts to mark his 27th birthday with a win.

A slalom follows Monday in Madonna Di Campiglio while the speed merchants return to action next Wednesday with a super-G in Ortlieb's home town of Lech.

Austrian skier wins women's downhill

ST ANTON, Austria (R) — Austria's Anja Haas delighted home crowds with the third World Cup downhill victory of her career Saturday, but it was two outsiders who stole the show.

Haas, 22, finished the two-leg race on the shortened Kandahar Course in an unofficial time of two minutes 19.25 seconds.

But 17-year-old team mate Renate Goetschl swept from a starting position of 62 to take fifth place in the first leg and then leaped into second overall in 2:19.35. It was Goetschl's first World Cup downhill race, though she won a slalom in Lillehammer.

Japan's Emi Kawabata, another virtual unknown, finished third in 2:19.41.

The race was run in two legs, because the course had to be shortened after heavy snowfalls put the top of the piste out of action.

The downhill counts towards combined points with a slalom to be raced Sunday and organisers felt running the downhill over one leg on a truncated course would have favoured slalom specialists too much.

In the first leg the course appeared to get faster as the race went on, favouring later starters such as Goetschl and Kawabata, who started 39th. Only the top 30 went on to the second leg.

Canada's Kate Pace, winner of the World Championship downhill in Morioka, Japan, and starting 13th, finished fourth in 2:19.52, while Russia's Varvara Zelenskaya, leader after the first leg, finished a disappointing sixth.

The first leg of the race measured 2,000 metres with a vertical drop of 610 metres, the second was 1,820 metres long, with a vertical drop of 510 metres.

"This was a great race for me," Haas said. "I made a few mistakes in the upper part of the course in the first leg, but the second run was just perfect."

Pele could be banned from World Cup draw

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Pele, soccer's greatest star, may be banned from Sunday's World Cup draw because of a legal dispute with the son-in-law of the president of soccer's world governing body.

FIFA President Joao Havelange refused to say whether Pele, the most recognisable athlete in the soccer world, would be allowed to participate in Sunday's World Cup draw. Despite repeated questions during a news conference Friday, Havelange refused to even utter Pele's name.

"Persons who participate are unimportant to FIFA," said Havelange, who has headed the governing body since 1974. "The presence or absence of one person changes it (the draw) in absolutely no way."

Pele has been sued by Ricardo Teixeira, president of the Confederation of Brazilian Football, in a dispute over the awarding of television rights to games in Brazil. Pele has charged Teixeira with corrupt practices, claiming his group wasn't awarded television rights because it would not pay a bribe.

FIFA officials said some in the governing body were attempting to change Havelange's mind.

"He has not definitely said no," said Joseph Blatter, FIFA's general secretary, who runs the Zurich-based organisation on a daily basis.

Guido Tognoni, FIFA's chief spokesman, said "some say the door is open; others say it's closed."

"It's an internal matter in the Brazilian Confederation," Tognoni said. "Dr. Havelange doesn't feel comfortable. But we have to respect the wishes of the president."

Alan Rothenberg, president of the U.S. Soccer Federation and chairman of the World Cup USA 1994 Organising Committee, appeared angry and agitated when told of Havelange's remarks.

"The notion that you could have a draw in any country in the world without Pele is unthinkable," said Rothenberg, who arrived at the Las Vegas Convention Centre minutes after Havelange's news conference. "I find it astounding."

Pele, 34, was part of Brazilian teams that won World Cup titles in 1954, 1962 and 1970. He popularised soccer in the late 1970s when he finished his career with the New York Cosmos of the North American Soccer League and is the only soccer player known to many Americans.

"FIFA is an institution, and the World Cup belongs to it and the final draw belongs to FIFA," Havelange said. "There is no obligation in this matter. It is reserved to FIFA."

Asked if U.S. organisers would be disappointed if Pele didn't appear on stage for Sunday's draw, which has an estimated worldwide audience of 500 million, Havelange said: "Mr. Rothenberg would be very disappointed if we withdrew the World Cup."

Pele was en route to Las Vegas from New York Friday and couldn't be contacted immediately.

"He's the World Cup spokesman for Mastercard," said Marianne Fulgenzi of Mastercard International, a World Cup sponsor. "He plans on being here. It's an integral part of our programme."

"We have the communications, hotels, sponsor support and stadiums and at this early stage we have virtually fulfilled all FIFA's requirements."

Japan had hoped to qualify for next year's World Cup to boost their bid for the 2002 tournament but an equalising goal by Iraq in the dying seconds of their final qualifying match allowed South Korea to squeeze through along with group leaders Saudi Arabia.

That result gave South Korea the impetus to press home their claims to stage the tournament.

Chung Mong-Joon, president of the South Korea Football Association said then: "We will tell people we have qualified for the World Cup three times consecutively and four times in all. Japan have never been there."

Murata said Japan were bitterly disappointed not to qualify. "It was a terrible moment. Such drama. I will never forget it. High hopes and then deep despair in just a matter of seconds. It took us a long time to digest it, but we have got over it."

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, has said it is most likely the 2002 World Cup will be held in Asia. The organisation's General Secretary Sepp Blatter said during a visit to Japan in October that Japan was halfway along the road to staging the finals and would be difficult to catch.

Murata says his country's professional 10-team J-League was going from strength to strength with every match a sell-out. He said soccer had now overtaken baseball as the dominant sport in some parts of Japan.

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Japan dismisses S. Korean challenge to host 2002 soccer World Cup

LAS VEGAS (R) — South Korea's challenge to stage the 2002 soccer World Cup was dismissed Friday by the general secretary of Japan's World Cup Bidding Committee, Tadao Murata.

Murata, who was in the casino city for Sunday's 1994 World Cup finals draw, told Reuters in an interview: "We don't care who else is interested in staging the 2002 finals."

"If South Korea now wants to come in as a rival because they have qualified for the World Cup next year and we have not, that is up to them."

"We are still confident we have a very good chance," Murata added. "We want to bring the World Cup to Japan for Asia. We want to prove that an Asian country can stage soccer's most glamorous and popular tournament."

"We have the communications, hotels, sponsor support and stadiums and at this early stage we have virtually fulfilled all FIFA's requirements."

Japan had hoped to qualify for next year's World Cup to boost their bid for the 2002 tournament but an equalising goal by Iraq in the dying seconds of their final qualifying match allowed South Korea to squeeze through along with group leaders Saudi Arabia.

That result gave South Korea the impetus to press home their claims to stage the tournament.

Chung Mong-Joon, president of the South Korea Football Association said then: "We will tell people we have qualified for the World Cup three times consecutively and four times in all. Japan have never been there."

Murata said Japan were bitterly disappointed not to qualify. "It was a terrible moment. Such drama. I will never forget it. High hopes and then deep despair in just a matter of seconds. It took us a long time to digest it, but we have got over it."

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, has said it is most likely the 2002 World Cup will be held in Asia. The organisation's General Secretary Sepp Blatter said during a visit to Japan in October that Japan was halfway along the road to staging the finals and would be difficult to catch.

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Witt on verge of completing a successful comeback

HERNE, Germany (AP) — The easy part was easier than expected, and it gave Katarina Witt a much needed confidence boost before the difficult portion of her Olympic comeback bid.

Witt, competing for the first time since 1988, trailed second going into the decisive free programme portion of the German National Figure Skating Championship.

The free programme counts for two-thirds of the overall mark and Witt will need an error-free performance to finish among the top three.

Such a finish will take her to the European Championship in January in Copenhagen, where only the two top Germans will secure berths at the Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway in February.

"This second place gives me confidence. I am very happy with my first competition after nearly six years," a beaming Witt said after the day's session. "I am eager for the Olympics."

"You really start from zero in the free programme, but I am really encouraged by my first competition," Witt said.

Witt, skating in front of judges for the first time in nearly six years, made a clean presentation of her "Robin Hood" short programme. A double axel came off slightly shaky but otherwise it was a confident performance.

Her routine began with Witt firing a mock arrow in the direction of the nine judges, and they responded by giving her high marks, including a 5.9 for artistic impression, just under the maximum 6.

Witt profited from mistakes made by some of her closest rivals, including Marina Kielmann and Simone Lang, who both finished behind her.

Leading after the first day, as expected, was Tanja Szewczenko, the 16-year-old upcoming star whose short programme included more difficult jumping combinations.

Szewczenko, although nursing a slight strain in her left ankle, said she would try six triple jumps in her free programme Saturday.

"It's been going well in practice and I am going to risk everything," said the German.

The draw for the free programme gave Witt the right to start first among the last group of skaters, followed immediately by Szewczenko.

"It's a good draw. I like going out first because I'm skating only for myself," Witt said.

Olympic champion in 1984 in Sarajevo and in 1988 in Calgary, Witt has picked Pete Seeger's anti-war song, Where

Have All The Flowers Gone for her free programme.

The theme was picked in part to send a message about the suffering of war-battered Sarajevo, where she won her first Olympic title.

The first time she presented the routine — during a show in Frankfurt on Dec. 3, her 28th birthday — Witt fell on her first triple jump, a relatively simple toe loop.

Critics called the presentation a flop and few experts expected Witt to be able to challenge with only four uncomplicated triple jumps in her programme.

"I was very nervous in Frankfurt, but I've put that behind me," Witt said.

"I can laugh again. I am glad about the way I withstood all the pressure," she said. "Now I have to concentrate on tomorrow."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey offers to revive pipeline idea

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Turkey is ready to revive a project to supply water to wealthy Gulf Arab states through a pipeline from two of its rivers. Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciler told a newspaper here Saturday. "It is clear the Middle East is undergoing dramatic developments towards peace," she told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Itihad. "If regional states show interest, Turkey could revive the water peace pipeline." Turkey proposed the ambitious project six years ago to supply water from its twin rivers of Euphrates and Tigris to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE. It paid around \$2 million for a feasibility study on the project, which it estimated to cost around \$21 billion at the time. It dubbed the project the Peace Pipeline as a symbol of what it called prosperity and cooperation among regional countries. But GCC states have turned down the proposal on the grounds its costs have increased to \$27 billion and it carries security risks.

Lebanon assures Turkey on Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (R) — Lebanon has told Turkey that Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan is person non grata in Lebanon and that it does not want guerrillas to use Lebanese territory to prepare for attacks in Turkey. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri gave the assurances on Friday during his visit to Turkey, which has been pressing Syria, Lebanon, Iran and the Kurds in northern Iraq to crack down on the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). Lebanon has closed down PKK training camps in Syrian-controlled eastern Lebanon but the Ocalan, the PKK leader, does visit Lebanon occasionally and some Kurdish guerrillas remain in Beirut and in the Bekka Valley. Mr. Hariri, asked whether the Lebanese government would detain Mr. Ocalan if it caught him in Lebanon, told the Turkish newspaper hurriyet: "We will throw him out of Lebanon."

EC gives Syria development aid

DAMASCUS (R) — The European Community (EC) is looking for stronger economic and social links with Syria after it approved a financial protocol for the country totalling more than \$178 million, a statement released here Saturday said. The statement issued by the European Commission in Damascus said the financial protocol approved by the European Parliament on Wednesday to Syria amounting to 158 million European currency units (\$178 million) would finance development projects. The European Parliament unblocked the aid to Syria which had been held up because of concerns over human rights.

Militants kill police colonel in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — Suspected Muslim militants on Saturday shot and killed a police colonel as he was leaving his house in northern Cairo, police said. Colonel Ahmad Shaulan, of the state security services, was attacked in the working-class Matariya neighbourhood as he climbed into his car heading for work, they said. He was wearing civilian clothes. The assailants, whose number was not specified, fled the scene and security officers launched a manhunt, they added. The shooting comes 48 hours after the hanging of three militants convicted of seeking to overthrow the secular government of President Hosni Mubarak. Fundamentalist organisations have repeatedly threatened to avenge the executions. Col. Shaulan's death brings to 81 the number of policemen killed since March 1992 when extremists stepped up their anti-government campaign. More than two-thirds of them were posted in southern Egypt.

Israeli undercover units strengthened

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army has stepped up the activities of its undercover units responsible for tracking down wanted Palestinians, due to a rise in anti-Israeli attacks, a commander of one of the units said Saturday. "We have a bigger presence on the ground and our activities have been bolstered, due to the growth in the activities of (extremists) who claim success in killing settlers," the commander told Israeli Radio. "They are using increasingly sophisticated methods, and we are adapting to them, because our work against wanted armed Palestinians continues." The colonel, whose name was not given, was from a unit deployed in the occupied West Bank. He said there was no question of dismantling the special units, whose members are usually disguised as Palestinians, despite the autonomy accord signed Sept. 13 in Washington.

Christian, Jewish leaders to meet

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Christian and Jewish leaders from 96 countries will meet at an inter-faith conference in Jerusalem next February 1, an organiser said on Saturday. "It is the first international meeting between the different Christian churches and the Jewish religion," Avraham Fried, the director of the Centre for Cultural and Social Studies in Jerusalem, told Reuters. Among those due to attend are Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger from the Vatican, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah and Israel's chief rabbis.

Libya, Iran urge anti-West unity

CAIRO (AP) — Libya and Iran urged fellow Muslims to work together, strengthening their religion to meet the challenge of all Islam's common foe, the West. "The enemy wants to sow discord among Muslims," Libyan Prime Minister Abu Zeid Omar Durrah said. "The Islamic countries should muster all their resources and show solidarity... to eliminate these problems." Libya Radio reported his comments Saturday in a broadcast monitored in London. It said visiting Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran, joining Mr. Durrah in the appeal after a meeting in Tripoli on Friday, offered greater Iranian cooperation with Islamic countries.

Iran says dozens of dissidents return

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran said Saturday that two dozen dissidents linked to a leading opposition group based in Iraq have given up the fight and returned to their homeland. The Islamic Republic News Agency, said the dissident, "member and supporters of the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, had turned themselves in at Iranian embassies abroad, "expressing regret for their past wrongdoings." The state-run agency said they were flown Saturday to Tehran from the United Arab Emirates and apparently tried to create the impression that the returnees would not be severely punished. There was no way of establishing the veracity of the report, monitored by the Associated Press in Nicosia. A Mujahadeen spokesman, Ali Safavi, called it "a sheer lie," had "a desperate reaction by the mullahs" to the organisation's challenge.

American aid worker maimed in Somalia

NAIROBI (AFP) — An American aid worker and several Somalis were seriously wounded when their vehicle hit a landmine near the southwestern Somali town of Luc, a relief official said Saturday. Ken Rutherford of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) had a leg amputated and doctors fear that he may lose the other one, an IRC official said. Mr. Rutherford, 28, was evacuated to the Kenyan capital Nairobi for the operation, and was to be flown to the United States for further treatment. The details of the incident, which occurred on Thursday, were still unclear, IRC officials said. The condition of the Somalis was unknown. Several foreign aid workers have been shot dead and several others wounded since foreign troops landed in Mogadishu last December. Four U.S. soldiers were killed by a landmine blast in August.

Israel may accept peacekeepers in Gaza

The Jerusalem Post

ISRAEL has for the first time agreed to an international peace-keeping presence in the Gaza Strip, according to the draft proposal it submitted to the PLO last week in Cairo. The Jerusalem Post has reviewed the 90-page document and found the following points: — The proposal allows for up to 100 civilians who may not possess weapons to comprise what the document terms a temporary, international presence. "The civilians can help

in such duties as assisting the Palestinian police.

The document lists what Palestinian organizations are acceptable and whose imprisoned members would be eligible for release.

— The proposal makes it clear that when trouble erupts anywhere in the areas of Palestinian self-rule, the IDF, (Israeli military) would be responsible. This includes the possibility of war or infiltration of hostile forces in Gaza or Jericho.

According to the document,

"If there is a conflict between Israeli security authorities and any other authority, power or responsibility... Israeli security authorities and responsibility shall prevail pending the resolution of this dispute and Israel may act to restore the situation of that prior to the conflict."

— Officials regard the most sensitive portion of the document as that dealing with extradition, something not dealt with in the declaration of principles.

Regarding what Israel can

do when its forces are in pursuit of suspected terrorists, and have information that a wanted criminal has sought refuge in Gaza or Jericho, the document says when a Palestinian commits a "serious crime" against an Israeli, the army can demand the transfer or arrest of the Palestinian suspect. If the Palestinian police force fails to do that, Israeli authorities are to do the job themselves.

— The Israeli proposal outlines the Palestinian police force. It will consist of five branches: a civil police; a para-

military gendarmerie; internal security intelligence similar to the General Security Service; emergency services, and coastal police.

Palestinian and Israeli security forces will organise joint patrols in several areas of the Gaza Strip, according to the Israeli proposal. The document rules out any transfer of police authority.

A senior PLO source dismissed the Israeli document, saying "it's not worth the garbage can it should be thrown into."

Kuwait sad to hear talk of ending Iraq curbs

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's prime minister said it was sad to hear speculation about a possible lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq, the Arab Times reported Saturday.

"It is really sad to see some of those who are deceived by (Iraqi President) Saddam (Hussein) currently talking about removing the international blockade on the Iraqi regime," Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah was quoted as saying.

"One should not forget that the current Iraqi regime is the real reason for this economic blockade which has brought catastrophes to the Iraqi people," he was quoted as saying. Sheikh Saad, who did not identify who was talking about lifting sanctions, was speaking in an interview with the Saudi newspaper Al Jazeera, the English-language newspaper said.

Sheikh Saad reiterated a demand that Iraq recognise the newly-demarcated border and the sovereignty of Kuwait. He also repeated a long-standing accusation that Iraq is detaining more than 600 Kuwaitis and people of other nationalities captured during its 1990-91 occupation.

Iraq, which occupied Kuwait for seven months in 1990-91, still claims Kuwait as its 19th province. Baghdad denies it still holds anyone detained during the Gulf crisis.

Sheikh Saad said Iraq had consistently refused to comply with U.N. resolutions requiring it to sell \$1.6 billion worth of oil under strict U.N. monitoring to pay for humanitarian aid and compensation to war victims.

Iraq has said oil sales under these conditions would be humiliating and a violation of its sovereignty.

Kuwait says it does not formally demand the removal of the Saddam government but would like all major disputes between the two countries removed before sanctions are lifted.

The Al Jazeera report made no mention of the start last week of Baghdad's repatriation of Iraqis from a border strip the United Nations has defined as Kuwaiti territory.

The Iraqi move, easing one of many points of tension between Iraq and Kuwait, was the latest in a string of positive Iraqi gestures to the international community in the past month.

Other gestures have included Baghdad's acceptance of long-term monitoring of its future weapons potential and releases of Western jail inmates.

Western diplomats say Iraq would have to formally recognise Kuwait and the demarcated border before Washington would even consider agreeing to lift the embargo.



'ARREST': Israeli soldiers 'arrest' a Palestinian boy in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Palestinian hardliners consolidate alliance

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — After months of deliberations, hardline Palestinian factions have formed an alliance dedicated to wrecking the Israel-PLO autonomy deal, faction leaders said Saturday.

They said the "Alliance of Palestinian Forces" will soon set up a joint command to direct the six-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The combined strength of the 10 groups, which espouse ideologies ranging from Marxism to Islamic fundamentalism, could hamper Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's quest to take control of territories that will soon gain autonomy from Israel.

It also will add to the challenges Mr. Arafat faces in implementing the already delayed Sept. 13 Israel-PLO autonomy accord, which foresees limited interim self-rule for nearly two million Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin failed to agree on implementation of the deal during talks in Cairo on Dec. 12, one day before Israel was to have begun a partial pullout from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Prospects for another Arafat-Rabin meeting remained unclear, and Palestinian opponents and Jewish settlers, who also oppose the accord, have stepped up violence in the occupied lands.

The 10 Palestinian hardline groups variously advocate an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, seized from Jordan and Egypt in 1967, and the total destruction of Israel.

The hardliners formed an opposition front in September 1992 to challenge the PLO's moderate strategy. But it has

PLO staff demand pay

AMMAN (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) employees staged a sit-in Saturday at the PLO mission to demand payment of their salaries for the past six months.

Protesters said they represented some members of the Palestine Liberation Army stationed in Iraq and activists of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fateh faction in Jordan.

Several dozen Palestinians sat in front of the mission for about 30 minutes before dispersing peacefully. Some said they planned to stage a demonstration with slogans and banners on Sunday.

Zakariya Al Habashneh, who is demanding backpay from October 1991 after working for Fateh in Lebanon, said: "We have not received our salaries for many months: some of us for two years."

"The only think we get is promises, which are not enough to feed our families," he said outside the PLO mission.

"If we are not paid, then we will use every means to secure our rights," said Mr. Habashneh. He did not elaborate.

A senior PLO official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Amman mission did not have enough funds to meet the demands of the protesters.

"The only thing we could do is to send their demands to the PLO," said the official.

PLO finances are controlled directly by Mr. Arafat, who is based in Tunis.

Many Gulf countries stopped their financial aid to the PLO when Arafat supported Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. They also froze several hundred million dollars in "liberation" tax collected from Palestinian expatriates.

The dried up donations have forced the PLO in 1991 to slash its \$300 million annual budget by 70 per cent.

Aideed lieutenants said to fast in jail

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Three officials of Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed's faction have launched a hunger-strike to protest the "very harsh conditions" of their imprisonment by U.N. forces in Somalia.

In a letter released late Saturday, the three officials of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) said they had been "fasting from food or drink" because of the conditions in which they have been held since their arrests in September.

"We are held in very harsh conditions of solitary confinement in strict incommunicado and blindfolded, with bad food and a lack of body washing and laundering water, under extremely scorching sun on an island off the southern coast of Somalia," the three men said in the letter, released by the SNA.

The organisation failed to explain how the men had managed to get the letter out of their place of detention.

The three being held are Osman Otto, a wealthy businessman considered to be the financier of the SNA, Omer Salah Elmi and Mohammad Hassan Awale.

"Our conditions of health were already bad and we don't know how our health and even lives will be after fasting," the letter said. The date of when they began the hunger-strike was crossed out and illegible.

"We appeal to the Somali people, world leaders and peoples, and human rights groups to look into our case and secure our release and those of other Somali captives as well."

"We were arrested and unfairly by sheer force," they said.

Last month the U.N. released around 30 supporters of General Aideed and suspended a manhunt for the warlord, wanted in connection with an attack that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers.

SNA officials said the hunger strike began on Thursday and would continue until U.S. forces set them free.

American troops serving as U.N. peacekeepers detained the three men during an unsuccessful campaign to capture and try Gen. Aideed for planning a massacre of Pakistani troops in June.

The hunt was called off a battle in which Gen. Aideed's militia killed 18 U.S. servicemen.

It was not possible to authenticate the letter and the SNA did not explain how they wrote it and signed it under the conditions it described.

The men are believed to be held near the southern port city of Kismayu.

Judge: Lawyer can give police Jackson evidence

LOS ANGELES (R) — A judge ruled Friday that the lawyer for a boy who claims he was sexually molested by pop star Michael Jackson can continue supplying evidence to criminal investigators. The 13-year-old boy has sued Jackson in civil court. The superstar's sought to have a "gag order" placed on Larry Feldman, the boy's lawyer, to prevent him from speaking about the case. Superior Court Judge David Rothman ruled that while evidence gathered by Mr. Feldman and provided to police and district attorneys' investigator was potentially detrimental to Jackson's case, it did not threaten a fair trial. Investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department and two district attorneys' offices are examining the boy's allegations to determine if criminal charges should be brought against Jackson. Investigators say they do not yet have enough evidence to formally charge the superstar. The 35-year-old entertainer has denied the boy's charges. One of Jackson's lawyers said Friday that the reclusive singer may break his silence next week.

Vatican says birth control exploits women

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican Friday renewed its condemnation of the use of birth control, saying it encouraged promiscuity, enabled men to exploit women and tore families apart. "The so-called sexual revolution, far from liberating human beings... has turned many into slaves of promiscuity," it said in a document marking the 25th anniversary of the "humane vitae" encyclical. The document was written by clerics and lay members of a Vatican Congress on the Encyclical, which was released in 1968 by Pope Paul VI and contained the Roman Catholic Church's strongest denunciation of contraception. "The widespread use of contraception facilitates the exploitation of women by men who are looking to satisfy their sexual desires without making any commitments," the new document said. It said families were some of the biggest victims of birth control as its broke down bonds between husbands and wives. "Experience has shown that the rise in divorces and the number of abandoned spouses and children who are left with just one parent," it said.

Place your bets for 1994

LONDON (R) — Do you fancy a bet on Prince Charles renouncing his right to the British throne or his bachelor brother Prince Edward marrying during 1994? British bookmakers William Hill will give you odds of 5-1 and 14-1 against respectively. Opening a book Friday on various events-punters can have a flutter on the next year, they also quote 20-1 against Eurodisney in France closing permanently, 50-1 against Queen Elizabeth abdicating and 100-1 against Margaret Thatcher being reappointed leader of Britain's ruling Conservative Party.

Rooney's novel idea for a book

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Mickey Rooney will make his debut as a novelist next spring in a unique venture with a New York book publishing company. In an interview Friday, Rooney said he had signed a contract with Carol Books under which he will receive no advances against royalties but will receive half the profits from the book. "To my knowledge, no author has ever come to this type of arrangement with a publisher," Rooney said. Steven Schragis, the publisher, said the idea of an equal partnership between a publisher and an author was a unique one. "We are a midsize company, and it is not easy competing against the giant publishing conglomerates. This is a way for a midsize publisher to publish in the big leagues," Mr. Schragis said. "A celebrity name is a big plus when it comes to publishing. Up to now the only way to get a celebrity author has been to pay big money up front. The idea of an equal partnership never got broached before," he added. Rooney said under the agreement he would have equal control of the book cover, how the book will be edited and how it will be publicised and sold. "It also eliminates a lot of middle men such as literary agents, which I happen to believe can be more of a hindrance than a help," said Rooney, whose 1965 autobiography, I.E., was a bestseller. He said his debut novel, Search for Sonny Skies, would be loosely based on the child stars he knew in Hollywood when he himself was a child prodigy.